



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. ....

Copyright No. ....

Shelf. ....

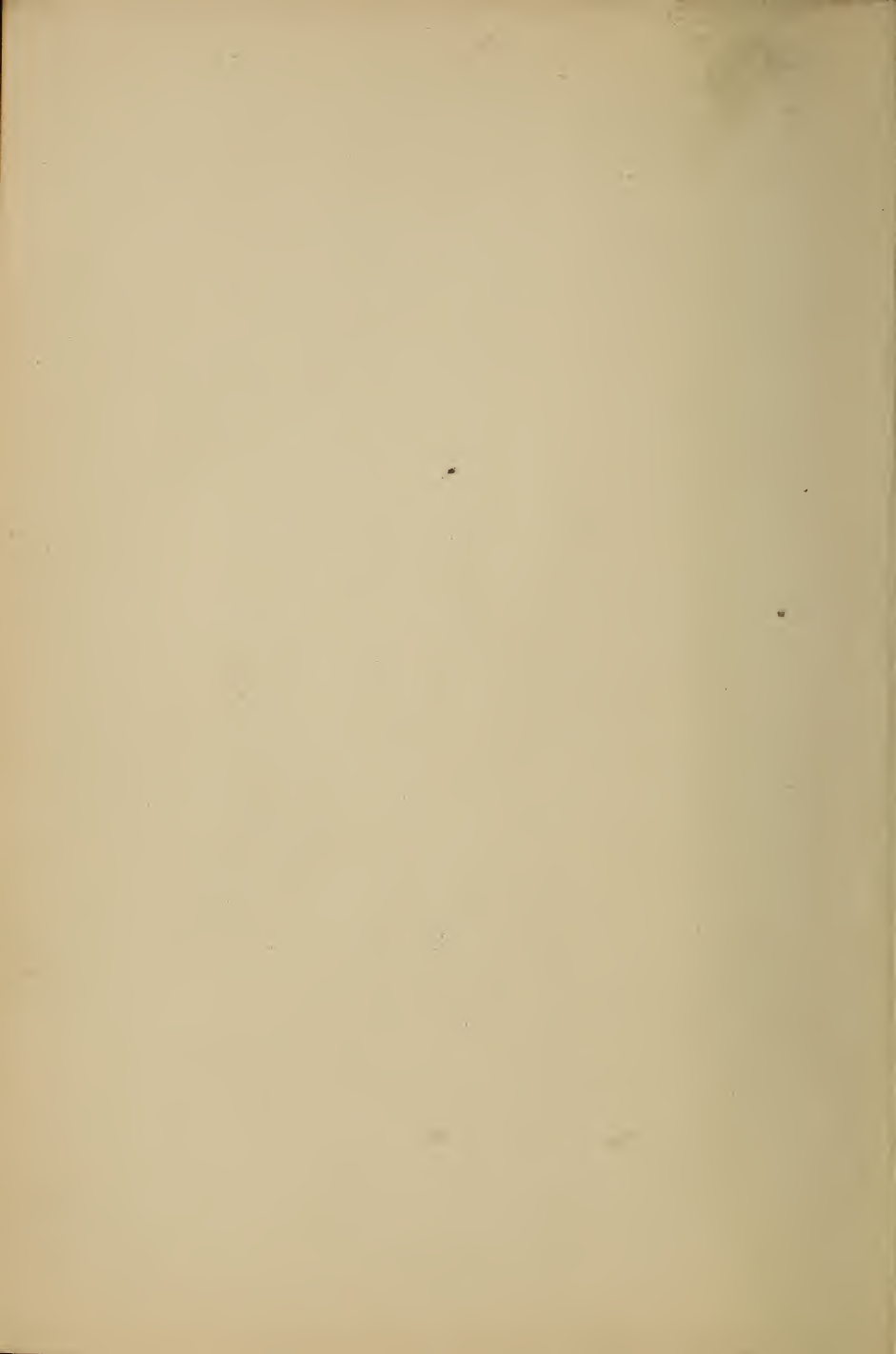
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











# STORIES FROM GENESIS

SERMONS FOR CHILDREN

BY THE

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

*Rector of Saint Mark's, Philadelphia*



49805-Z<sup>1</sup>

NEW YORK

E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

COOPER UNION

1894

THE LIBRARY  
OF CONGRESS  

---

WASHINGTON

COPYRIGHT, 1894, BY  
ALFRED G. MORTIMER.

TO THE  
CHILDREN OF SAINT MARK'S PARISH  
THESE SERMONS  
ARE  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

BV4315  
M65

## PREFACE.

---

I MUST ask the kind indulgence of my readers for a more personal explanation of the purpose of this little book than is usual or necessary in a preface. The book is the result of a promise in the fulfilment of which I have found more difficulty than I expected. For while it has been one of the privileges and pleasures of my ministry for many years to preach to children every Sunday afternoon (excepting during the holiday times), yet when I came to attempt to write down these sermons I was met with two difficulties: first, the impossibility of writing in the familiar and colloquial style one uses in preaching to children, interspersed constantly with questions, homely illustrations and anecdotes; then on the other hand, I felt that merely to give an outline of the sermon would be quite

useless if the book were, as I intended, to be read by children or by parents and teachers to their children. I have therefore attempted a middle course. The sermons as they stand were simply dictated to a stenographer, which will account both for the want of fulness of an extempore address and the absence of that terseness and precision which belong to a written sermon. The first, as I have said, seemed impossible; the latter, I think, would be unsuitable to children.

I have added to each sermon an analysis, in order that those who care to may try a plan which for many years I have found most successful:

1. I tell the children beforehand what chapters or passages of the Bible they are to read in preparation for the next Sunday's sermon.

2. At the end of each division, as I preach the sermon, in as few words as possible I sum up that point (as may be seen in the analysis) and make the children all repeat the summary together, sometimes two or three times over, until they have it quite clearly. I also make



them repeat after me any important texts which I quote, and where they may be found. At the end of the whole sermon we go over together all the points, I asking them: "What was the first? What was the second? What text did I quote under this head?" etc.

3. The next Sunday, before beginning another sermon, the children again 'repeat all the headings of the last Sunday's sermon.

The attention and emulation which this stimulates among the children during the address, and the care which is taken by many of them during the week to really memorize what they have learned, is very striking. The memories of children are very quick and they retain with great ease such instruction if it be practically digested before it is given them; I mean, if the points of the analysis be clear and more or less associated with one another by the sequence of thought. I have found more than a year after in preaching, that they could repeat every point of an old sermon.

Again a mistake which I venture to think is

often made is that of confusing simplicity of statement with absence of thought. I believe children are quite able to grasp a great deal of theological truth, if it be clearly put, and, indeed, that they take great interest in so doing, and that a very valuable foundation of Church teaching may thus be laid. In these sermons, therefore, on the Book of Genesis, I have not so much aimed at telling the familiar stories of that most interesting book, as at drawing from each one some important lesson and so linking with it in the minds of the children, certain definite teachings as to doctrine and morals.

Except where needed to give definite point to the sermon, I have generally omitted anecdotes, because the same ones find a place in almost every book of children's sermons and may also be found collected in manuals of anecdotes, and so can easily be added by each preacher.

There are many books of children's sermons, and yet few seem to meet the need. This little book of mine is but an experiment. If it be successful, others may follow.

---

To Him Who said, "Feed My lambs," I commit this work, with the prayer that His Blessing, which alone can make it helpful, may rest upon it.

ALFRED G. MORTIMER.

ST. MARK'S CLERGY HOUSE,

PHILADELPHIA,

*All Saints*, 1894.



# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
I. ADAM AND EVE. — I. The Knowledge of God, . . . . .	I
II. ADAM AND EVE—II. The Life of Work, . . .	II
III. ADAM AND EVE—III. Curiosity, . . . .	23
IV. ADAM AND EVE—IV. The Laws of Tempta- tion, . . . . .	35
V. CAIN—I. Worship, . . . . .	44
VI. CAIN—II. Responsibility, . . . . .	59
VII. ENOCH. Life in God's Presence, . . . .	71
VIII. NOAH—I. The Obedience of Faith, . . .	81
IX. NOAH — II. The Three Missions of the Dove, . . . . .	93
X. ABRAHAM. Perseverance, . . . . .	108
XI. LOT. The Dangers of Worldliness, . . .	118
XII. HAGAR. The Presence of God, . . . .	127
XIII. MELCHIZEDEK. The Gifts and Claims of the Church, . . . . .	135
XIV. ISAAC. The Privilege of Suffering, . . .	147

---

	PAGE
XV. ESAU. Man's Admiration, God's Aversion,	158
XVI. JACOB—I. Besetting Sins, . . .	167
XVII. JACOB—II. The Vision of Heaven, . .	177
XVIII. JOSEPH—I. The Coat of Many Colours, .	191
XIX. JOSEPH—II. Adversity, . . .	203
XX. JOSEPH—III. Prosperity, . . .	214

# I

## *ADAM AND EVE.—I*

### *THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD*

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.”—GEN. iii. 8.

WE are going to-day, my dear children, to try to learn a lesson from what the Bible tells us of our first parents, Adam and Eve. We see them in the opening chapters of Genesis surrounded by the creatures that God had made, like those lower creatures in many respects and yet absolutely different in one—in the possession of a soul created in the image of God. While the other creatures in their beauty and usefulness reflected God’s attributes of Wisdom and Love and Power, Adam and Eve had within them the very image of God Himself. And as they were created in the image of God, so they were endowed with many great gifts; power to hold

communion with God, to know Him and the creatures around them. And the first lesson we will try to learn shall be something about their knowledge.

You, dear children, know how hard a thing it is to acquire knowledge. When you were very young indeed you knew almost nothing, and all that you know now has had to be acquired through the laborious processes of experience and learning. First, through experience you have gained much knowledge about yourself and your own little world, and then by being taught you have made your own what other people gathered by experience and learning. And yet I hope you feel, even the oldest of you, that however much you know, even if you are at the head of all your classes, yet there is such an enormous amount still to be learned that your little knowledge is like a mere drop in the great ocean of Truth. You have parents and teachers to help you to learn, to answer the many questions which come up in your minds, but Adam and Eve had no parents to help them



and no teachers to answer their questions, and yet Adam and Eve had a very great knowledge of this world and its powers, and that knowledge was the direct gift of God. They knew by intuition, by God's special gift, what we have to learn slowly and laboriously by experience. This we see from the fact that we are expressly told (Gen. ii. 20) that Adam bestowed upon every living creature its name, and undoubtedly the names in this case implied some knowledge of the nature of the creatures which were brought to Adam to be named. We learn something of the nature of the different creatures around us by watching their habits and living with them, but Adam by a direct gift of God was able to know and therefore to name each separate creature. And we can quite see how necessary this must have been, for if Adam had not known any more than a little baby the properties and powers of the things around him, he would have been quite unable to live in the world or to use the things which God had placed there for him.

But this was not the only kind of knowledge

---

that Adam had. It is very necessary that we should know something about the things of this world and their uses and their dangers, but all our knowledge of this world sinks into insignificance in comparison with the importance of our knowing God ; and Adam knew God. He did not only know *about* God, as children do who learn their Catechism and read their Bible, but he knew God as children may who *pray* well ; he knew God, that is to say, in the intimate intercourse of communion with Him, for we are told that "*They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day*" (Gen. iii. 8), and this was the great gift which they lost to a very great extent by their sin. They knew God's Voice, they loved to hear it. It filled them with holy hopes of a great future with their Father in Heaven, when their work in this world was done, for though they would not have died if they had not sinned, yet they would not have been left always in the Garden of Eden, but when they had passed through their period of probation and trial, in some mys-

terious way—perhaps like Enoch or Elijah—they would have been translated to be with God in a better world than this.

How beautiful it is to think of them in the cool of the day when their work was over, hearing God's Voice amid the trees of the garden ! They could not see God any more than we can see Him, but they could hear His Voice speaking to them much more clearly than we can, because the ears of our souls have become deaf by sin ; so that we have to listen very, very carefully and train our ears very, very patiently before we can hear God's Voice speaking to us at all.

But yet this knowledge of God, which was one of their greatest losses in the Fall, has been more than restored to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Before He came into the world, the world was indeed in darkness and death. Men had almost lost the power of hearing God's Voice. Here and there we find some great prophet raised up to hold intimate communion with God and to bring God's message to man ; but now every little Christian child, in the cool

of the day, when work is over and before they lie down to sleep, in their prayers can speak to God, and if they listen carefully can hear God speak to them. It is a great thing for you, dear children, to learn *about* God, to learn what He has revealed about Himself in the Bible and through the Church, and yet it is much greater for you to *know* God in the intimate communion of prayer.

So you see that Adam and Eve had two sorts of knowledge, both of them the direct gift of God—a knowledge of this world in which they lived and of the creatures around them, of their powers and nature and use, and, what was their great joy, a knowledge of God, the power of hearing His Voice directly, that Voice of their Father in Heaven, telling them of His love for them, of that happy Home which He had prepared for them, and of their duty and privilege of serving Him during their life in this world. Both of these sorts of knowledge we may have. The first imperfectly ; by the labor of investigation we gradually learn to know a great deal

---

about the things in this world and about their nature and use, although, as we have to find all this out unaided by God, we often make very great mistakes; indeed every generation of men finds out that the last generation was wrong in a great many of its theories about this world and the creatures in it. We may know too about God, and here, if we are humble and try to learn, we *need* make no mistakes, for God has given us a revelation about Himself and has given us an infallible guide in His Church to interpret that revelation, and His Holy Spirit in our hearts to help us to understand it. To gain more and more of this knowledge of God must be the great purpose of our whole life. As we learn to know Him better here we shall love Him more and trust Him more; so that the knowledge of God will be our greatest interest and joy. In this life there is implanted in us a great desire to know things, and most people spend a very large part of their life in learning about things which when they die will be of no use to them whatever. When we think of the



busy brain of some great student who has stored up enormous treasures of facts about the things of this world, let us remember that if he has neglected the one important science, the knowledge of God, all else will be of no avail to him in the world beyond. In this life we are to learn more and more about God, and Heaven will be the end of this life, when we shall see God face to face and know Him even as we are known; when all those strange mysteries and secrets of the universe which excited our interest and filled us with awe in this world, will be revealed to us in that life which we shall live forever in God's Presence in Heaven. Here we can know such a little of God; there we shall know God perfectly.

One of the great Saints of the Church, who was himself a very learned man before he became a Christian and who used all his learning in the interests of the Church, tells us that he one day saw upon the seashore near Carthage a little child making a pond in the sand and with a shell dipping water out of the ocean and pour-

ing it into his little pond ; and St. Augustine, for that was his name, said that it reminded him of our efforts to know God's truth in this life : that our small capacity could only hold, as it were, some few shellsful of divine Truth, but that in Heaven there would be a revelation of all the great ocean of Truth.

Now, dear children, in this my first sermon on Adam and Eve, we will try to learn just one small lesson—the importance of knowing about God ; for if we know Him we shall love Him ; if we love Him we shall keep His commandments and serve Him ; if we serve Him we shall live with Him as His children in the glories of that home which is prepared for us in Heaven.

#### ANALYSIS.

I. Adam and Eve not only differed from all the creatures around them in that they were made in the image of God, but in the possession of special gifts—consider one, knowledge :

i. We acquire knowledge in two ways, by ex-

---

perience and by being taught ; Adam and Eve had it by the direct gift of God.

- ii. They had knowledge not only of the creatures around them, but of God through communion with Him.
- iii. The knowledge which they lost by the Fall is restored as regards God through the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. These two sorts of knowledge we may have :

- i. The first, the knowledge of creatures, only imperfectly and after labor.
- ii. The second, the knowledge of God, through God's revelation of Himself in the Bible, through the Church, and by His Holy Spirit in our hearts.
- iii. The one purpose of our life must be to get more and more of the knowledge of God ready for Heaven, where we shall see Him as He is.



## II

### *ADAM AND EVE.—II*

#### *THE LIFE OF WORK*

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.—GEN. ii. 15.

IN my last sermon on Adam and Eve we saw that the first great lesson their life teaches us was the importance of knowing God. Now let us learn another lesson from them—the importance of Work.

We are told in the words of my text that they were put into the Garden of Eden by God “to dress it and to keep it”; so that you see their life was not to be a life of idleness. Sometimes I dare say children think, “Oh, if I had nothing to do how happy I should be! I should like every day to be a holiday.” But, my dear children, those in this world who are idle, who think that they have nothing to do, and who do prac-

tically nothing, are just the people who are most unhappy. They are generally discontented and irritable and miserable, taking an interest in nothing, and as their life is all holidays it simply seems a dreary, uninteresting time. Holidays get their joy from being contrasted with working days.

But perhaps you say, dear children, that work is so hard and difficult and you often get so tired and do the work so badly that you are only ashamed of it when you have done it. Ah, this was not the sort of work that Adam and Eve had to do before the Fall, when they were in the Garden of Eden. They had not sinned, and so work was always interesting and always successful and comparatively without difficulty. They were surrounded by a beautiful garden and it was their joy and delight to dress it and keep it and to see it responding to their loving toil in producing everything beautiful and good. Work then had none of the disappointments that it has now, because work then was work with God's blessing resting on it, and so full of most abun-

dant results. But when Adam and Eve sinned by disobedience, that very work which had been their delight became their punishment, for we read in Genesis iii. 17-19, that on account of Adam's sin God cursed the ground so that it brought forth thorns and thistles, and gave Adam as part of his punishment that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread ; that is, that work should no longer be easy and always successful, that he should have to toil and labor with all sorts of difficulties in his path, that he should know what it was to be very tired and very weary and still have to go on working, and that instead of the ground bringing forth abundantly its fruits in response to his labors it should often disappoint him, and instead of the fruits that he sought there should be thorns and thistles and weeds that told of sin. When we find our lessons very hard to learn or our work very difficult to do, when we are quite tired and perhaps our heads ache and we are inclined to give up in discouragement, then, dear children, let us think, "This is the result of sin ; not only

of the sin which Adam committed, but of my own sin"; and let us bear it patiently and cheerfully and toil on, remembering that God is watching us—toil on lovingly and gladly in spite of all our difficulties, realizing that they are the punishment of sin, which God in His love gives us now to bear, that in that true Home of ours, where sin shall be no more, we may enjoy the reward of our labor.

So let us to-day learn a special lesson from the words of my text—the charge that God gave to Adam and Eve when He put them into the Garden of Eden,—that they were to dress it and to keep it. Some people have thought of the Garden of Eden as though it were absolutely perfect and there were no signs of death or decay, no marks of sin there, and yet this does not seem to have been so. The very fact that Adam was to dress it and keep it implies imperfection, and that it needed his care. There was no sin in Adam, and so his heart was light and his labor was full of joy and power, and the garden in which he worked was wonderfully re-

sponsive to his efforts ; but there had been sin in this world before Adam and Eve were created, which left its marks everywhere in the death of the lower creatures, for you know we cannot conceive of their growth without death. The animals could not have lived without food, and in getting their food they must have caused death to the creatures on which they fed. Sin had come into this world before Adam and Eve were created, probably from the fall of the Angels, for the Book of Revelation tells us that when Lucifer rebelled against God he was driven out of Heaven and cast out into the Earth, and his angels with him (Rev. xii. 9), and he brought sin and imperfection into the lower world around. But when God restored the earth which Satan ruined, while the marks of sin were still there, it was an earth full of beauty and obedient to man's rule, so that Adam's charge to dress and keep the garden did not involve the difficulties that we have to meet with in our work.

But, my dear children, God has given exactly the same charge to us ; that is, He has given us

a garden to take care of and to keep in order. Can you guess what that garden is? Shall we say that Eden represents to us our souls, so pure and beautiful when God created them in His own image, and yet needing such care lest they should become all ruined and spoiled? Think of your soul, my dear children, as a beautiful garden, capable of producing the most glorious fruit and the most lovely flowers, but, alas! capable also of growing dreadful weeds. Your work is to dress and keep this garden of your soul. Let us consider how best you can do this.

First, there must be the negative work of weeding. How fast the weeds grow in a garden, how hard it is to understand how they get there! Yet we know if our garden is to be kept in order we must be continually on the lookout to pull up the weeds. So you must go into your gardens continually and do a great deal of weeding, first by self-examination, to find out what are the weeds, the faults of your character—weeds in our thoughts, thoughts of pride, vanity, anger, envy, jealousy, and unholy



desires ; weeds in our words, impatient words, untrue words, irreverent words, perhaps even impure words ; weeds in our acts, sins both of omission and commission. We must find these out by self-examination. We should try to make a habit every night of looking over our garden to see what weeds have taken root there during the day, and then we must pull them up by penitence.

Then the next thing to do to our garden, I suppose, would be sowing good seed. *The* good seed was sown in our Baptism, the germ of a Christlike nature ; but besides this we must be trying to sow the seeds of all the Christian virtues. And then, we know a garden often requires watering in order that what grows there may not wither away for lack of moisture, and we must water our garden by constant prayer, and when we are old enough, by the regular use of the Sacraments.

Then Adam and Eve were not only to dress the garden, but also to keep it ; and that's the hardest part, dear children, for it is compara-

tively easy for us in Lent to try to pull up the weeds and to sow a great deal of good seed and to water our garden with a great many prayers and to get it, perhaps, into beautiful order before Easter, but it's so hard to keep it so ! When the Church's festival seasons have passed away and the hot summer-time comes and we are not being continually reminded about holy things, then it's so hard to watch our gardens and see that Satan doesn't come and sow tares among the wheat, the seeds of all sorts of sins ; so hard to be watchful lest our garden should become dried up because we do not water it enough with our prayers ! Yes, dear children, those who are older than you, I suppose, could tell you that it is always harder to "keep it" than it is to "dress it."

And then, just one other thought. For whom are we to dress and keep our garden ? For our dear Lord. I will give you a text which, when you are getting tired of keeping your garden, you can sometimes think of : "*Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ; blow upon my*



*garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits*" (Cant. iv. 16). Here, you see, we learn for whom we work and toil in our garden, for our Beloved. And who is our Beloved? Who is it that we love best in all the world? I am afraid some of us, if we tell the truth, would have to say, self. Some of us simply work and toil for self, and the fruits which our garden produces are only the fruits which we like, the fruits of self-will. But we must try to conquer self and remember that we are not our own, but "bought with a price"; that the garden of our soul belongs to our dear Lord, and it is to Him that we must say the prayer, "*Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.*" We could not dare to say that prayer unless we were really trying to have some fruits which we knew our Lord would delight in, the fruits of charity and humility and purity and gentleness and patience and obedience. These are the pleasant fruits in which our Lord can delight.

---

But our text tells us something more than for whom we are to work. It tells us of some one who can help us in our labor. What does that mean, "*Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ; and blow upon my garden*"? It means the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, for you know, in the language in which the Bible was written, the words "spirit" and "wind" are the same. The north wind is the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Penitence, blowing upon our garden and helping us to kill all the weeds ; and the south wind is the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Prayer, enabling us to make Acts of Faith and Love and Oblation. We are not left to till our garden alone, the Holy Spirit will help us.

And so you see to-day, my dear children, we have learned another great lesson from Adam and Eve. An enemy came to them in the Garden of Eden and tempted them to disobey and to sin, and then the thorns and thistles began to grow. An enemy will come often to us and tempt us to disobey and to sin, and then our

garden, our soul, will look like a tangled mass of thorns and thistles and weeds. We must watch and we must work in order that our souls may be like Eden, fair and beautiful, a place where God may love to dwell, as He loved to walk with Adam in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. If God be in our garden and we be striving to keep it always for Him, Satan will not be able to get in, for God and Satan cannot dwell in the same soul. Satan cannot get in unless we listen to his temptation and open the gates to him. Let us begin at once our work, put our gardens in order, root up the weeds, cast out the stones, sow the good seeds, water them with prayer, and then watch and ask our Beloved to come into His garden and dwell with us always.

#### ANALYSIS.

Adam and Eve put into Eden to dress it and to keep it.

I. So their's not a life of idleness, but of work :

i. What makes work so hard now ? Sin.

- 
- ii. Adam had not sinned ; so his work was not hard.
  - iii. The marks of sin in Eden caused by the Fall of the Angels.

II. Our Eden is our souls ; we are to dress them :

- i. By weeding ; self-examination and penitence.
- ii. By sowing good seed ; Baptism, Christian virtues.
- iii. By watering ; Prayer and Sacraments.

III. We are not only to dress the garden, but to *keep it*. This is the hardest part, because, if we grow careless and do not watch, Satan comes and sows Tares, seeds of sins.

IV. For whom do we work in our garden ?  
For our dear Lord. Text, Cant. iv. 16.

- i. Who is our Beloved ? Our Lord.
- ii. What are His pleasant fruits ? Christian graces.
- iii. Who will help us ? The Holy Ghost.

The north wind, the Spirit of Repentance.

The south wind, the Spirit of Prayer.

Conclusion. We must work and watch, watch and pray, pray that our Beloved may always dwell with us.

### III

#### *ADAM AND EVE.—III*

##### *CURIOSITY*

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die : for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.—GEN. iii. 4, 5.

WE have learned two lessons already, my dear children, from the story of Adam and Eve. Let us to-day try to learn a third.

Among the many good things which God has implanted in our nature is the passion of Curiosity, the thirst to know. You see I call Curiosity a good thing and given us by God, but it is like a sharp tool, very sharp so as to cut easily and to enable us to do our work well, but if our hand slips and the tool cuts us instead of the work, its very sharpness will cause it to make a deeper and more dangerous wound. Curiosity is one of our greatest gifts, for it is

the gift which if disciplined makes for knowledge. It is the gift which enables people to become wise, to learn, to conquer the difficulties of ignorance ; but its tremendous danger is that it often leads us into forbidden paths. Curiosity, guided by the Holy Spirit, will lead us to become wise unto salvation, will lead us to search into the deep things of God, will make us love to know all that is good ; but we know, alas ! too well, that there is another spirit, a spirit of evil, the Devil, who will try to guide our curiosity into the paths of sin, who will try to make us wish to know what is naughty, that the very knowledge of which poisons and defiles our souls.

So in the Garden of Eden we are told that there was a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, a tree against which Adam and Eve were warned that they were not to eat of it. How hard it is, dear children, to be obedient when our curiosity is excited ! How many stories there are, of which you all know, in which curiosity has been the great factor leading to sad



---

and terrible consequences. We all remember the story which we listened to with such delight when we were very little children, about Blue Beard and the key which opened the one closet which was not to be entered; and while that was only a fable and we know was not true, how like the experience of our life it is, how like the experience of every life, even the life of Adam and Eve! There in the midst of the Garden was that strange, mysterious Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve had a knowledge of good, for they knew God, who is Good, and every day they lived they learned to know Him better and so knew more of good. They had a knowledge of partial goodness in the creatures around them which God had made for their use. The food which they ate was good, the beautiful flowers which delighted their eyes, the waving grass, the sparkling streams, the birds and insects as they flitted about through the air, the stars that shone at night, all were good. They knew what goodness was; but evil—what was that? Of that

they had no knowledge except of the name. And so we can imagine Eve wondering what this knowledge of evil would be, wondering and perhaps talking to Adam about it, and trying to imagine what this naughtiness, this sin would be in its effects upon them. They knew the joy of communion with God, they knew the pleasure of communion with Nature, they knew the strange sensations of delight as they drank in the beautiful sights around them in Eden, the delicious taste of its fruits. Would a knowledge of evil be like that? Would it thrill their nature with some new delight? Might it not be something even deeper and more satisfying than the knowledge of good? What was it? What could it be? And all to be within the reach of their hand! One moment and they could put forth their hand, take the fruit, eat it and know this great secret, open the door which was to usher them into the mysterious chamber of Evil and show them the strange sights which were hidden there. And yet God had warned them that they must not do this, aye, not only



had forbidden them on pain of displeasing Him by disobedience, but had told them plainly of the terrible results evil would have in their own nature—they would die. They thought they knew what death was, for they saw animals dying around them. Death seemed to them simply the end of existence. They thought they knew what it was to die, but ah! they did not, for their death meant not only the death of the body, but the death of the soul, eternal death! that living death with every craving and appetite intensified and with no possibility of ever satisfying it; that death which was separation from God, Who was the joy and end of their whole being. They did not know this. How could they? God had warned them that if they ate of the tree they must die, but Satan came and tempted them. As long as they were alone they could resist the desire to know, they could restrain curiosity, they were held back partly by fear of the strange penalty, still more, let us hope, by love—love, which made them look upon disobedience to God as impossible.

But Satan came to them and tempted them. And first he suggested a doubt as to the truth of God's revelation (Gen. iii. 1.): "*He said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" He called in question the truth of God's revelation, whether God had really said that, whether God had really meant it. He insinuated that it was hard that they should not know this wonderful secret, and that God could not have meant them not to eat of it, that it could not be wrong for them to take of it. And so with every sin into which curiosity leads us, Satan begins by suggesting to us that it cannot be wrong for us to *know* about it, that we need not go on *to do* the wrong that others do, but that there can be no great harm in our knowing what it is, what evil is.

And then when Eve plainly replied that God had said, "*Ye shall not eat of it, . . . lest ye die,*" Satan went on further and denied the truth of what God had said, and replied, "*Ye shall not surely die.*" And so, when we are tempted to

evil curiosity, Satan having first tried to make us think that there will be no great harm in knowing, when our conscience rises up and says to us, "Yes, but you have been warned that in the knowledge of evil great punishment must follow," Satan replies, tempting us, "Oh, no, there will be no punishment, for you need not *do* anything at all, only you ought to *know* about it." And then, alas! too often we yield to the temptation, and that knowledge which we then acquire, oh, what would we not give to get rid of it! The knowledge of sin coming up in our thoughts to tempt us again and again and again, the knowledge of evil leading us not to be content merely with the knowledge, but to wish to taste it. Adam and Eve not only took the fruit, but they ate it, and then the knowledge of evil coursed through their veins, poisoning their whole life, descending to their children and children's children. What a punishment! Not only that they were driven out of Eden, not only that they lost that daily communion with God, not only that they were punished by having

to toil in the sweat of their face for their daily bread, not only that the earth brought forth thorns and thistles, but that there was in them a strange, terrible knowledge, continually impelling them to wish to sin.

In the life of Mahomet, the false prophet, the founder of Islam, we read that a certain Jewish captive determined, in revenge for the evils which Mahomet had inflicted on her countrymen, that she would poison him. When they were at Khaibar she made the attempt. She cooked a piece of lamb for his dinner and put poison into it. Mahomet ate but a mouthful when he detected the strange taste and suspected poison. He ate so little that it did not kill him, but the poison got into his system and ruined his health, and years and years after, as he felt its deadly effects, he used to say that he felt the poison of Khaibar coursing and throbbing in his veins. So it is with evil curiosity. One may repent of the sin committed and learn to hate it, but weeks and months, perhaps years, afterwards that knowledge of evil will come up

in our memory, tempting us; will, like that poison of Mahomet, continue to race, as it were, through our veins.

Again, dear children, let me remind you that curiosity is not sin; no, that it is an awful power given us by God to enable us to attain to a knowledge of what is good; but that it must be disciplined and guided by His Holy Spirit and restrained from ever wilfully tasting the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of evil. I say *wilfully* tasting, because as we grow older we shall have to know a great deal about evil; but oh, dear children, put it off as long as you can, for that knowledge will sadden your lives and make it harder to resist sin. How merry and light-hearted is the laughter of an innocent child, how pure and unclouded is its brow, how clear and fearless is its eye! But when the knowledge of evil comes into life it robs us of our light-heartedness, clouds our brow with the furrows of care, and it takes away from our glance the fearless joy of innocence. When we must know it, we must contemplate

it as God contemplates it, only to hate it, only to realize how evil it is—never, never to taste it. The very contemplation of it will bring sadness into our lives; to taste it will bring poison—the poison of sin. There is enough in the world, dear children, to gratify your curiosity without seeking to know evil. The Bible tells us (Phil. iv. 8) what we are to seek to know, in what paths we may safely exercise our curiosity to its fullest extent. Let me read you what Saint Paul says: “*Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*” (Phil. iv. 8). Aye, think on those things, dear children, and your curiosity will lead you to a knowledge of God—God, Whom to know is life eternal; that knowledge of which I spoke to you before, in my first sermon on Adam and Eve; that knowledge which is the interest and joy of life here and will make up the happiness of our



life hereafter. But if you allow this keen-edged weapon of curiosity to be used in the knowledge of evil, and it becomes blunted and spoiled for its true use, you cannot find the same pleasure in searching into the things of God, in investigating what is pure and good, after you have spoiled your instrument in investigating the things of evil. The power is blunted, the great faculty is spoiled and the knowledge of God, to which curiosity is intended ultimately to lead you, becomes harder, far harder, to acquire.

And let me remind you in conclusion how the danger began. It began by neglecting God's warning, by thinking at the suggestion of Satan that God did not mean what He said when He said, "*In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. ii. 17). It is so easy to persuade ourselves that the consequences cannot be so terrible before we sin, but after we have incurred those terrible results, how much we would give to get back our innocence!

## ANALYSIS.

I. Among God's greatest gifts is Curiosity, the thirst to know things.

- i. Guided by the Holy Spirit it leads to a knowledge of God and of all good.
- ii. Guided by the Devil it leads to a knowledge of sin, which poisons and defiles the soul.
- iii. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Eden was a great trial to the curiosity of Adam and Eve. God had warned them, and they resisted until the Devil came and tempted them and told them God would not punish them as He had said.

II. We may learn that :

- i. Curiosity unrestrained leads to a knowledge of sin which embitters life and is itself a temptation.
- ii. Curiosity itself is not a sin, the sin is the *wilful* tasting of the knowledge of evil.
- iii. The Bible tells us what to think about.  
(Phil. iv. 8.)



## IV

### *ADAM AND EVE—IV*

#### *THE LAWS OF TEMPTATION*

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.”—GEN. iii. 6.

ONCE more, dear children, let us try to learn a lesson from the history of Adam and Eve; and this time it shall be a lesson on the Laws of Temptation.

If I were asked to sum up in one word the story of any person's life in this world, I could do it in that one word, Temptation. From the time that we know the difference between good and evil, that is, from the time of our very early childhood to the day of our death, our life is one long struggle with temp-

tation; and in the history of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden we see the first appearance of temptation in the arena of the world's life, and when we come to examine it, as we shall this afternoon, we see that it contains in itself the laws of all temptation. We learn how much alike all temptations are; how, although Satan may disguise himself in many ways, he generally uses the same devices to lead us to yield to his suggestions.

As we saw in our last sermon, Satan approached Eve through the passion of curiosity, a passion altogether good in itself, and yet capable of being used in a most evil direction. First he persuaded Eve to examine the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He called her attention to the fact that it was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise. Now you know, dear children, that when you say your Catechism you say that you promised in your Baptism, through your sponsors, to renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and you made this threefold promise

because you are made up of three distinct parts, each of which is liable to be tempted in its own peculiar way. You know what the three parts are—body, soul, and spirit. Sometimes each one seems to be so entirely yourself that you forget in speaking that you have the other two parts to make up your entire self. For instance, when you cut your finger you say of the pain, “It hurts me”; and you mean by “me” your body. Then sometimes you say (at least, I hope you do), “Now, I will be good to-day”; and by the “I” you mean your soul. And then perhaps at another time you say, “I have been thinking”; and you mean the spiritual part of your nature. Although the three are so closely connected, so continually interpenetrate one another that it is difficult to separate them, yet each has its own peculiar capacity for temptation, and its own special foe to tempt it. Your body has those evil appetites and desires which you mean when you say, “I renounce the sinful lusts of the flesh”; your soul has those companions in the society around

you who influence you to evil, and whom you speak of when you say that you renounce the world, its pomps and vanities; and your spirit, which you share with the Angels in Heaven and those fallen angels whom we call devils, has these as the tempters of the spiritual part of your nature to whom you refer when you say, "I renounce the devil and all his works."

Sometimes we divide our temptations under the three root sins of Sensuality, Covetousness, and Pride, and St. John speaks of them in his first Epistle as "*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*" (1 St. John ii. 16). Now if we turn back to the words of our text, we shall observe that in the first temptation Eve was assaulted in all three parts of her nature. She saw the tree was good for food; here it appealed to her fleshly appetite. This was the temptation renounced as "*the lust of the flesh*," the temptation of Sensuality. Then she observed that it was pleasant to the eyes; here we have what St. John calls "*the lust of the eyes*,"

what the Catechism calls the “poms and vanities of this wicked world,” the root sin of Covetousness. Then when she felt that it was to be desired to make one wise, it appealed to the spiritual part of her nature, what St. John calls “*the pride of life*,” what our Catechism calls the very temptation of the devil himself, the deadly sin of Pride. Some foolish people speak of the story of the Fall as though it were the mere childish desire to eat a forbidden apple; but we see that even in the most childish temptations the principle of evil in all its threefold methods of attack is present, appealing to each of the three parts of our mysterious nature. All three parts in the case of Eve were assaulted at once. Her fleshly appetites made her wish to eat it; her soul desired to possess it; her mind longed to know the secrets which were hidden in it and would be revealed in eating it, and so she took it, she disobeyed God and yielded to the suggestions of the devil; she took it, and fell.

But that is not all. No sooner had she sin-

ned herself than she tempted Adam, and so it is a law of temptation that when we sin, either intentionally or not, we generally go on to try to lead others to sin.

*“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day”* (Gen. iii. 8)—that Voice which they had so often heard before, to which they used to look forward with such intense joy; that Voice which day by day satisfied more and more of their right curiosity, taught them more and more of the things which it was good to know. But now they had disobeyed God, they had sinned, and sin separates us from God, and so they heard the Voice with dread, and went and hid themselves amongst the trees of the garden. How foolish! as if we ever could hide ourselves from God! They hid themselves, but God in His love did not allow them to remain in their hiding-place. He *“called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”* And Adam answered, *“I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, and I hid myself”* (Gen. iii.



9, 10). Sin makes us fear God, not with that spirit of Holy Fear which helps us to love God, but with that spirit of terror which makes us dread the very thought of God and try in our folly to hide ourselves from the sight of God.

And God, still in love, leads Adam to confession ; asks him, "*Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ?* " and Adam answered, "*The woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat*" (Gen. iii. 11, 12). How sin makes cowards of us all ! Adam in his cowardice tries to put the responsibility on Eve. It was quite true that it was she who had tempted him, but that did not make his sin any less. And so we sometimes in our blindness try to persuade ourselves that our sins are not our fault, because others tempted us ; but that will not do at the last great day, when we shall have to give an account of all our sins. We shall each have to stand alone before the judgment-seat of Christ, and then we cannot make excuses that others tempted us.

But Adam confessed his sin, and God then,

as now, gave him penance and absolution. First He gave him penance, and that penance was lifelong. He was to be driven from the garden, he was to live in continual enmity with the devil and to suffer in the struggle to overcome the evil which he had taken into his own nature by disobedience; the very labor which had been so interesting and so full of power before was now to be accompanied with weariness and failure. The thorns and thistles, which were part of the penance of his sin, were to interfere with and spoil his work. And yet God forgave Adam's sin. He gave him this sad penance before He gave him full pardon. He told him of the promise of Christ, the Redeemer, through whom alone all sin is pardoned, and as we look back to the Cross as the source of our pardon, so Adam looked forward to it as the means of his.

So, dear children, we learn something about that strange law of temptation which is all around us from our childhood to our death, and upon our victory over which, our happiness in



Heaven depends. Let us remember that there are three avenues to be guarded, body, soul, and spirit; three foes to be conquered, the flesh, the world, and the devil, before we can gain our prize and win back that Heaven which Adam and Eve forfeited by sin.

ANALYSIS.

Temptation, the history of human life; its laws:

- i. The three parts of our nature liable to temptation, body, soul, and spirit.
- ii. The three root temptations, the world, the flesh, and the devil; Covetousness, Sensuality, and Pride; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 St. John ii. 16).
- iii. The tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, to be desired to make one wise.
- iv. When Eve had yielded she tempted Adam.
- v. God called them to confession, gave them penance and pardon.

## V

### *CAIN.—I*

#### *WORSHIP*

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth ? and why is thy countenance fallen ? If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted ? and if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door.”—GEN. iv. 6, 7.

I AM going to talk to you to-day, my dear children, upon a difficult subject, and yet one which it is very important that you should understand. The sin of Cain. Sin came into the world with Adam and Eve ; then its fatal seed was planted in human nature. How rapidly it grew, how soon it brought forth its fruits and how bitter and evil those fruits were, we see in the story of their children, Cain and Abel ! Adam’s sin was against God, an act of deliberate disobedience in eating of the forbidden fruit. Perhaps you think that Cain’s sin, on the other

hand, was against his fellow-man, the sin of murder in slaying his brother Abel. But I want to-day to try and show you, dear children, that Cain's sin was not only the sin of murder, that it did not begin with hatred of his brother, but it began, as all sin does begin, in disobedience to God.

You know that when David had committed his two great sins, by which he broke the Sixth and Seventh Commandments, when he repented he wrote the Fifty-first Psalm, and said these words to God: "*Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight*" (Ps. li. 4). And yet it would seem at first sight to us that David's sin was not so much against God as against Uriah, whom he caused to be murdered, just as Cain's sin was against Abel, whom he slew. But it is of great importance, dear children, that we should realize that all sin is against God in two ways. First, in its essence, that is, in its very nature. All sin is against God because it is a breaking of God's Law, as St. John says: "*Sin is the transgression of the*

law" (1 St. John iii. 4). In our hearts, in the Bible and in the Church, God has written His Holy Law, and when we break that Law in thought, word, or deed we sin against God. We may injure and wrong our neighbor by our sins, but our *sin* is essentially against God, because it is a transgression of God's Holy Law. Even sins in thought against our neighbor, such as sins against charity, are against God's Law; for God has commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and by the same St. John He has told us that if we do not love our neighbor we cannot love God; for, "*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his neighbor, he is a liar*" (1 St. John iv. 20). If we love God we shall keep His Commandments, and His Commandment is that we love our neighbor as ourselves. So that you see, I hope, dear children, how all sins against our neighbor really come back in their very nature to being sins against God, disobedience to His Holy Law, acts of rebellion against His Love. But there is another way in which all sin is against God, and that is *in its*

---

*beginning*, for, as a matter of practical experience, all sin *begins* by our neglecting our duty to God, by forgetfulness of His Presence. If we are striving to serve Him in prayer and worship, if we love to remember that He is always with us, we could not sin against our neighbor. If we remember that text, "*Thou God seest me*" (Gen. xvi. 13), at the time that we are tempted to sin against our neighbor, I am quite sure that we should find it impossible to say the angry word or do the wrong deed or give way to the hateful thoughts. So we may learn here the importance of religion, that is, of our duty to God in prayer and worship and sacraments, if we are really to do our duty to man. People often think, dear children, that it is very important to keep the last six Commandments, to be gentle and loving and pure and honest and truthful, but that it does not much matter about going to church regularly, saying our prayers carefully and receiving the sacraments, whereas the truth is that if we do not first serve God there is very little likelihood

of our being honest and pure and truthful and gentle, for it is in our religious life, in prayer and worship and the sacraments that we get that grace and strength which alone can enable us to do our duty in the world to our fellow-men. So we come back to what St. John says, that if we do not love God we are not likely to love our neighbor, and that if we hate and wrong our neighbor the real reason is because we do not love God.

Now, perhaps, you do not see what this has to do with the story of Cain and his terrible sin, yet I hope to be able to show you that Cain's sin illustrates what I have been saying, and was the direct result of his neglecting his religious duties, or rather doing them in a spirit of disobedience. It is very striking that right back in the very beginning of the world we have so awful an instance of what comes of the neglect of God's commands in the duty of religious worship. Now I will read you my text again, and I must point out to you that one word is not quite correctly translated. The



text is: "*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.*" The word which is twice translated "do" means in the original "offer," and so the text should read: "*If thou offerest well (or rightly), shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou offerest not well, sin lieth at the door.*" Directly after Adam's sin, we find that the one law of religious worship was the law of sacrifice. Man did not dare to draw near to God except with some sacrifice or offering, which witnessed to his recognition on the one hand of his own sin, and on the other of God's justice. Now the sacrifice commanded by God seems always to have been a sacrifice of animal life. We are told that Abel was a keeper of sheep, and these sheep must have been for sacrifice, not to feed upon; because it was not until after the flood that man was allowed to eat any animal food, and this sacrifice of animal life was intended to teach man how his own real life had been forfeited by his sin, and could only be redeemed by the sacrifice of the life of Jesus Christ, the



Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ; so that Abel, keeping his flock for the purpose of sacrifice, had for his vocation a sort of priesthood, and Cain had to come to his brother Abel to get the lamb which, according to God's commands, he had to offer in order to fulfil his duty in religious worship, and in coming to Abel he had in some respects to recognize Abel's superior position, which was very galling to his pride. And so Cain thought he would worship God in a different way from what God had commanded, and instead of offering the lamb he would offer the first-fruits of the ground, and so escape the unpleasant necessity of recognizing Abel's priesthood.

Cain brought his offering—not what God had commanded, not the lamb which pointed to our Lord Jesus Christ, but what I dare say cost a great deal more than the lamb—the fruits of the ground ; and so Cain, you see, made himself practically his own priest and worshipped God after his own idea. And God did not receive his offering, which made Cain very angry,

and then God said the words of my text: "*Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou offerest rightly, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou offerest not rightly, sin lieth at the door.*"

Now, ever since the time of Cain there have been two ways in which people have worshipped God—either according to God's revealed commands or according to their own private opinion. Abel worshipped God with a lamb, as God had commanded; Cain, according to his own private opinion, thought that the fruits of the earth would do just as well. I will not take up the time to point out to you all the different instances in the Bible of this, but I will just mention one or two to show you how strict God is about the way in which people worship Him. You, most of you, know, do you not? the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who rebelled against the idea of Aaron's exclusive priesthood and thought that they could offer incense to God just as well as Aaron could, and you know how God caused the earth to open

and swallow them up to show His displeasure against those who presumed to disobey Him in the way in which they performed their religious duties (Numb. xvi.). And then, only to mention one other instance, there is the sad story of Uzzah, who put out his hand to save the Ark from falling when it was being brought to Jerusalem by David in a cart, and was immediately struck dead (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7); God having said that no one was to touch the Ark, and that when it was moved it was to be carried in a certain way upon poles, and by a certain family of Levites (Ex. xxv. 12-16; Num. iv. 15). Uzzah thought it did not matter to observe what God had said about the ritual of carrying the Ark, and he was struck dead. And so now, dear children, there are a great many people in the world who will tell you that it does not matter how you worship God so long as you are sincere; that it does not matter what religion you belong to. But the Bible shows us again and again, from the time of Cain right through its whole history, that God will not accept worship which is founded on self-will and disobedience.

God has revealed to us in the Christian Church how we ought to worship Him. Now, in place of the lamb which the Jews offered, we offer the very Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar; that Lamb Which was slain once for all upon the Cross of Calvary, and Which St. John saw upon the Altar in Heaven just as It had been slain (Rev. v. 6), and Which the Priest offers supernaturally in union with that Offering in Heaven every time he celebrates the Holy Communion. Now in this Offering there must be a lawfully ordained Priest, and the service used must be the lawfully ordained service of the Church. When people who are not priests draw near to offer, and use words of their own invention, they are doing what Cain did, what Korah, Dathan, and Abiram tried to do, what Uzzah did. They may be doing it quite sincerely, and may think that they are doing right, but our thinking that we are doing right does not make a thing right when God has said it is wrong. A red Indian thinks it is

right to torture and to scalp his captives, but we know that that does not make it right. We say, he does it in ignorance, and therefore we hope that God may forgive him, but *we* cannot plead ignorance—we who are children of the Church, we who are taught the right way to worship God. Sectarians may be very good people—many of them, I dare say, are better than some of us, and we hope that as they think they are right and their schism is the result of ignorance of the truth, that God may accept them, but we must be very careful that we do not follow their example, because we could not plead, as they would be able to, that we were brought up in ignorance and never knew any better.

Now, I told you in the beginning of my sermon that I was going to talk to you about a very difficult subject in trying to explain to you the sin of Cain, but if you have been very attentive I hope you have been able to understand it. Cain's sin began by neglecting his duty to God in his religious worship, wor-

shipping God in the wrong way through pride and unwillingness to recognize Abel's position as the Priest of the family, and God refused to receive his offering, and then when Cain was cut off from God's grace he got very angry, and having no grace from God to help him to restrain his anger, he gave way to it and murdered his brother. Then what a terrible life was his! With the mark of God upon him, with the brand of sin upon his brow, with his brother's blood upon his soul, wandering through the earth! and it all came from what?—neglect of his duty to God. O, my dear children, if only all through our lives we are careful to do our duty to God, careful to say our prayers every morning and evening, careful to repent of our sins and to seek pardon for them, as the Church teaches us, careful to come regularly, when we are old enough and are confirmed, to the Holy Communion—if only we do this all through our lives, we are not likely ever to fall into any great sin. Great sin almost always means that we have first turned away from God, given up



---

our religious duties, given up, for instance, our Communion, or have neglected to repent of our sins, or have said our prayers very carelessly, or perhaps not at all. In all these cases we are fighting in our own strength, fighting without God's help, and that can only end in one way—we fall into grievous sin. We may not be tempted to commit the great sin of murder, as Cain was, but there are other great sins which will kill our soul and to which we are liable to be tempted any day. Do not let us dare, dear children, to go out to the battle of life unless we are quite sure that we have God with us, quite sure that we are striving first of all to love God, and you know our Lord Jesus Christ says that if we love Him we shall keep His Commandments, and one of His Commandments is that we shall worship Him according to the way which He has revealed to us in His Church; not according to our own private opinions, but in holy obedience to that Law which He has written in His Church. No sin in our eyes is greater than murder, no mur-



der can be worse than the murder of one's own brother, and the murder of Abel came from neglect of religious duties and disobedience to God's Law on the part of Cain.

#### ANALYSIS.

I. All sin is against God in two ways :

- i. In its essence and nature ; we may injure our neighbor, but we only *sin* against God.
- ii. In its beginning : it is the result of forgetting God, of breaking His commands.

So we learn that in order to do our duty to our neighbor we must first do our duty to God.

II. When Adam sinned God ordained the law of sacrifice, the lamb which pointed to Christ. Abel kept his flock for this. Cain resented having to get the lamb from Abel, offered what God had not commanded, and his offering was rejected, then in envy and anger he murdered Abel.

III. People can worship God in two ways :

i. According to His revealed commands in the Church.

ii. According to their own private opinions.

In the history of Cain, Korah, and Uzzah we see how God punishes such self-will.

IV. In the Church, God has revealed how we are to worship Him, by offering the Lamb of God in the Holy Eucharist. If we are careful in our religious observances in prayer and worship we are not likely to fall into any very great sins, but if we neglect these it may be the beginning of any sin.

## VI

### *CAIN—II*

#### *RESPONSIBILITY*

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother ? And he said, I know not : Am I my brother’s keeper ?”—GEN. iv. 9.

You all know who spoke these words and after what terrible sin they were spoken. When Adam sinned he went and hid himself, but God, in His great mercy, called him from his hiding place and asked him those questions which led him to confess his sin. So it was with Cain. No sooner had he murdered his brother Abel than God, who, while He is all Just is also infinitely Merciful, asked him those questions in my text which would have made it so easy for him to have confessed his great sin. God asked him, “Where is Abel thy brother?” and Cain lied—lied, dear children, to God, Who sees and

knows all things—lied, and said, “I know not”; and added, half in defiance, half in excuse, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” and this was just after he had murdered his brother!

You see, then, how Cain added one sin to another. First there was the sin of Pride, which, as I told you in my last sermon, kept him from seeking the lamb for sacrifice, as God had commanded, because he had to get it from his brother Abel, and so to recognize his brother’s superiority. Then came the two children of Pride, Envy and Hatred, because Abel was better than he and so God accepted Abel’s offering while He refused his. Then the offspring of Envy, Murder; and then the child of Murder, Lying, and, worst of all, lying to God Himself.

So it almost always is. Sin rarely stops at one act, but is generally most prolific in its offspring, and this is especially the case with the sin of lying. It is very rarely a root sin, and so you find that it is not mentioned either in the Ten Commandments or among the Seven Deadly Sins, because it may come sometimes under one,

sometimes under another. Here you see, if we take the sin of lying, which is the sin brought before us in this particular verse, we can trace it up through its terrible pedigree back to the sin of pride; and, indeed, lying generally (though not quite always) can be traced back to that sin, to pride. What a shameful ancestry! The first parent Murder, the grandparents Envy and Hatred, the great-grandfather Pride, that sin which caused the fall of the Devil;—that sin which even now in us is so absolutely universal that it is like a drop of poison spoiling the best actions of most of our lives.

But we will turn away from Cain's sin and to-day consider simply God's question and Cain's excuse. God asked, "Where is Abel thy brother?" and Cain replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

This brings before us, my dear children, the solemn question of our responsibility for other people's sins. I mean, of course, for those sins of other people which we have in some way been the cause of, or which we might by some word

or action of our own have prevented. We might plead that we do not *make* our companions sin, even though we may tempt them by word or example, that they have free-will and that they need not sin unless they choose, and so it is their fault and not ours if they sin. But I do not think any child could make this excuse without feeling that it was a very poor excuse indeed. It is so hard in this world of sin to keep ourselves pure, so hard to resist the temptations that are without us, within us and all around us, that we need to help one another in every possible way to stand against temptation, and never, never to put temptation in a brother's way.

But perhaps the best way to study this important question will be to take two texts from the New Testament which teach us, I think, very clearly, first, our negative duty of abstaining from injuring our brother's soul by word, act, or example, and secondly the positive duty of helping our brother, when we have the opportunity, to bear his burdens and trials and temptations.



The first text you will find in St. Matthew xviii. 6, 7: "*Woe unto the world because of offences!*" Have you ever thought, my dear children, that these were the most terrible words that our Blessed Lord ever spoke? for while it is true that He uttered other woes when He said, "*Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!*" yet here, see how He qualifies it with those words, referring to him by whom the offence should come, "*It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*" Not only better that he had never been born, but better that he were drowned; not only better for the one whom he had offended, but better for the man himself. It must indeed have been a sin of no ordinary guilt, a crime of the deepest dye, which could wring from the tender Lips of our loving Lord Himself such words as these. And what was this sin of "offences"? I must explain to you the meaning of the word. The word "offence" in the Greek is a word which signifies "to put a stumbling-block" in another



person's way, something for them to fall over. I read not long ago, at the time of the great strike in Chicago, of some wretched men who removed the bolts from the rails and put something on the rails to cause the trains to run off the track! Just think how cruel, how wicked, to send into eternity, perhaps, without a moment's notice, numbers of people, all unprepared, men and women, and even little children, who were riding along in fancied security, full of life and spirits and talking perhaps gaily of the home to which they were going or of the excursion which they were making, and never dreaming for one instant that any human being could be so fiendish as to wreck the train and injure in life and limb those who had never harmed them in any way, those whom they had never even, perhaps, known! If such a man were caught, what do you think ought to be done to him? Do you not think people would say no punishment was too great for such a villain? Do you not suppose that the parents of the little children to whom he had brought death or a

life of suffering would take the direst vengeance upon him? Do you not feel that the whole community would rise up with one accord to punish such a man? Yet this is exactly what our Blessed Lord meant when He said, "*Woe unto the world because of offences!*" only that He was thinking of injury to the moral nature instead of the physical, He was thinking of killing souls instead of killing bodies. Oh, my children, when we are inclined with one burst of indignation to condemn any one who could commit such a crime as I have been describing, let us pause and ask ourselves, "Have I ever been guilty, through thoughtlessness, of something very similar? Have I ever by my words or acts put stumbling blocks in the way of other children, which have caused them to go astray from the right path, which have wrecked their lives? Have I ever taught them what they ought never to have known? Have I ever sowed in the garden of their young hearts tares which they will never be able entirely to root up? And if so, have I not been guilty of very much the

same sin that Cain committed?" And—most dreadful thought of all, my dear children!—when in God's love we hear His Voice calling us to repentance, calling us to confess our own sins; when perhaps we are older and obey that Voice, and feel sure that our sins are forgiven, that He who is so infinitely loving forgives us all our sins—then there comes up that terrible question, "Where is thy brother?"—thy sister, whom you taught evil, whom you laughed out of religion, whom you set an example of wordliness? "Where is thy brother?" And perhaps, dear children, we may have to answer with truth, "I know not; I have lost sight of them in the great stream of life; they have gone one way and I another. By God's great goodness I have been led to repent of my sins, but whether they have repented or not, I know not." Oh, when you are tempted to talk about bad things before other children, when you are tempted to laugh, perhaps, at religion in others, remember, dear children, remember these words of our Blessed Lord, "*Woe unto the world*"

*because of offences!*" Remember God's question to Cain, "*Where is thy brother?*" and Cain's answer, "*I know not.*"

The other text you will find in the second verse of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians: "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*" Here we have a positive precept in regard to our duty to our brother. Not only are we most carefully to abstain from putting stumbling-blocks in our brother's way—not only shall we have to answer at the great Tribunal of God if we have in any way injured our brother's soul, but if we are to "*fulfil the law of Christ*" we must do something more; we must strive to help him to bear his burdens, to carry his cross, to resist his temptations, to fight his battles, to win his crown!

My children, let me tell you what is the greatest joy in life. It is not the possession of much money, it is not the winning of great popularity, it is not even the love of good friends. It is the privilege of being allowed to help another soul on its road to Heaven. "*Bear ye one*

*another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* Do not be always talking about religion. Pray do not in the least try to seem to be what you are not in religious matters, but just watch your opportunity, serve God yourself with all your heart and soul, and when the opportunity comes speak a word for Him, your Master, your Lord, Whom you have learned to love.

Many, many years ago I was told of a Priest who was called to visit a dying man, and he heard his confession and prepared him for death, but the dying man said to him: "The one thing which troubles me more now even than the great sins of my life, is a trick that I played when I was a boy. Not far from where I lived was a large Common, in the middle of which two roads met, and at these cross-roads a rickety sign-post directed the traveller to his destination. The arms of the sign-post were loose, and one day, for fun, I took them down and changed them, so that they pointed out the wrong road; and now that years have rolled by and I am dying, it worries me greatly to think how many a



poor, weary traveller across that Common I sent on the wrong road."

Oh, my dear children, remember, the time will come when we shall all have to die, when we shall have to make our last self-examination of all the great sins of our life. God grant, then, that we may not have to recall that we have sent others in the wrong road—others, pilgrims like ourselves, who looked to us, perhaps, for guidance, and we pointed them, by our life, by our words, by our example, in the wrong way, in the way that led away from Heaven. Dear children, be yourselves sign-posts pointing Heavenward, for the day will come when God will ask you the question, "*Where is thy brother?*" when you will have to give account not only for your sins, but for your gifts, for your opportunities, for your power of influence. Let us so use that mysterious power now that in that Day there may be many with us on the right hand whose burdens we have helped to bear, whose feet we have helped to guide in the paths of peace; that there may be none on the left hand whose souls we

have murdered, as Cain murdered his brother Abel.

#### ANALYSIS.

Introduction.—Sin is generally prolific in its offspring. Trace the pedigree of Cain's lie to God.

I.—Our responsibility for other people's sins, through temptation, or neglect to use our opportunities of helping them.

i. The negative duty of not tempting another.

*"Woe unto the world because of offences."*

(St. Matthew xviii. 7.) Offences=stumbling-blocks.

ii. The positive duty of helping others when we have an opportunity. *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* (Gal. vi. 2.)

II.—The greatest joy in life to help another soul. Let us remember the Last Day, when we shall be asked, *"Where is thy brother?"*



## VII

### ENOCH

#### LIFE IN GOD'S PRESENCE

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”—HEB. xi. 5.

WE come now, my dear children, to a very mysterious character, one of whom we are not told much, for indeed all we know of him is contained in three verses of the Bible. In the twenty-fourth verse of the fifth chapter of the Book of Genesis, where we are told that “*Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him*”; in the fourteenth verse of the Epistle of St. Jude, where we are told that “*Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints*”; and in this verse of my text, where we learn that “*Enoch*

*was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him : for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."* We are not told much about Enoch, and yet I think we may learn some very valuable lessons from his life. In the first place, he was a type of our Blessed Lord in his Ascension, that is, he was translated, or taken up to Heaven alive, and in this way typified our Lord's Ascension.

No sooner had Adam by his sin forfeited Paradise than God in His mercy and love promised a Redeemer. You know, dear children, the first prophecy was uttered even before the sad sentence was passed upon Adam for his sin, when God said to the serpent, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*" (Gen. iii. 15). This was the beginning of a long chain of prophecies, which prepared the world for the coming of our Blessed Lord, but it was not only by prophecy that our Lord taught people to look

forward to Him, but also by what we call "types," that is, He caused the lives or parts of the lives of certain great heroes of Old Testament history to anticipate, as it were, certain aspects of His own life and work. Indeed, so deeply impressed were Adam and Eve, after their sin, with the hope of our Blessed Lord's speedy Advent, so earnestly did they look for it, even in their own lifetime, that when their first child was born, Eve called him Cain; for she said, "I have gotten a man, the Lord." This shows that they hoped and expected that this child might be He who was to be their Saviour. So at all times in their history, devout Jews have expected the coming of the Messiah. Then the next child, Abel, was a type of our Lord in his Passion, being slain through envy by his brother; and Noah was a type of our Lord in many ways, but especially in the Resurrection—when all the world died by the flood, Noah came forth alive from the Ark—and Enoch, as I have just said, was a type of Christ in the Ascension; so that you see God ordered

many men's lives as types to point people to Christ.

But not only was Enoch a type of Christ, but, as St. Jude tells us, he also prophesied of Christ, for he prophesied, "*Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints*"; and in the same verse, the fourteenth verse of St. Jude, our attention is called to the fact that Enoch was the seventh from Adam, and if we turn to the fifth chapter of Genesis we shall find it so—Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, there we have them, seven in all; and the number seven symbolizes perfection and rest, and Enoch's was the first perfect life and was a life of rest, for he walked with God. All around him the world was getting worse and worse every day and the strife and turmoil of sin was everywhere, but he walked with God in a perfect life, and so found rest amid the strife.

Now, dear children, let us notice some things which belong to such a life as that of Enoch, and which we must try to imitate if our life is to be in any way like his.

First, it was a peaceful life. You will remember, when our Lord was crossing the Lake of Galilee with the Apostles in a little fishing-boat, He was fast asleep in the stern while the storm raged and threatened to wreck the boat. The Apostles became very much frightened and went and awoke Him, saying, "*Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm*" (St. Mark iv. 38, 39). So it is with all our lives. The storm must be around us, the winds and the waves of temptation; the forces of the world, the flesh and the Devil will strive to wreck us, and sometimes when temptation becomes very strong or lasts an unusually long time, we, like the Apostles, get frightened; but if our Lord Jesus Christ is in our heart, if, like Enoch, we are walking with Him, we need not fear, for though the storm may rage around there will be peace, perfect peace, within us. We, if we are walking with Christ, may say in the words of the Psalmist: "*God is our hope*



---

*and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof rage and swell, and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same. . . . God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early"* (Ps. xlv. 1, 2, 3, 5). A life of peace, because the Prince of Peace is reigning in our souls, because we have taken Him for our Lord and our King. Peace! How those who are striving in the world long for it! How impossible it is to have a happy life without it; yet how few seek it where alone it can be found, in the Gift of Jesus Christ! "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* (St. John xiv. 27). Only let us follow Enoch in walking with God, and we shall with Enoch experience the blessings of Peace.

Secondly, his life was a life of union with

God, for we are told "he walked with God," and, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (Amos iii. 3). And what does this mean but a union of wills? All our sin, all our unhappiness, we can trace to our own self-will. Our Lord Himself has taught us to say as the very central petition of His Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven"; and when we have learned not only to say this in prayer, but to love it as the true law of our life, that is, when our will is so blended with God's Will that our only wish is that His Will may be done, then will be the true life of union. God's Will is the great power which moves the universe, as we are told in the Gospel that not one sparrow falls to the ground without God's Will; but His Will is not only All-Powerful, but All-Wise. He can never will anything that is not for the very best, and so when we pray that His Will may be done in us, we know that that means the very best and wisest things for us. Enoch walked with God in the union of an undivided will. So everything in Enoch's life was beautiful and



perfect, because it was ordered not by man's self-love, but by God's Omnipotent and All-Wise Will.

Thirdly, Enoch lived in the great future. He could not walk with God and place his hopes in this dying world. He knew that at the longest his days here must be few. He knew that of all that he might amass during his lifetime on earth he could carry nothing away with him, and so he lived in the great future, in that other world where his true Home was, in that other world where God was all in all. All the decisions of his life were made with relation to this great future; all its sorrows and joys were borne in the realization that they were but for a moment and that they must be judged and valued only with reference to their helpfulness or harmfulness in the life to come.

Dear children, we must try to live like this; to remember that earth is not our home. It is not much use singing beautiful hymns about Heaven unless we are really trying in our everyday life to live for Heaven, unless we are trying to live as though our life on earth were indeed

a time of exile, as though we were indeed strangers and pilgrims, passing through a foreign country, with all our hopes fixed upon our own true native land, upon our own dear Home in Heaven. This was Enoch's lesson to the world. His life is summed up in but a few words in this chapter of Genesis. We are told of no great things he did or suffered, only he lived for God, he pleased God, and that as his reward he was translated directly to that Kingdom of Love which was always the goal of his life, the end of his hopes. It will not be said of us, as of Enoch, that God translated us to Heaven. We shall have to pass through the grave and gate of death, but it may be said of us, if we do our part, what is more important, and what was said of Enoch, that we walked with God, and that we had this testimony, that we pleased God.

#### ANALYSIS.

I. Enoch is mentioned three times in the Bible, Gen. v. 24, Heb. xi. 5, and St. Jude 14.

II. He was a type of our Lord in His Ascen-

---

sion, as Abel was of the Passion and Noah of the Resurrection.

III. Let us notice three things in Enoch's life which we must try to imitate :

- i. It was a peaceful life, while all around was strife.
- ii. It was a life of union with God and therefore of conformity to God's Will.
- iii. It was a life lived in the future, in the hope of Heaven.

## VIII

### *NOAH—I*

#### *THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH*

“Thus did Noah ; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”—GEN. vi. 22.

AFTER the sin of Cain the world grew rapidly more and more wicked. Men seemed to have forgotten God altogether and simply to live for the gratification of their own desires. At last the world became so full of sin that God in His wisdom determined to destroy it by a flood, in which only a small remnant should be saved ; and that through this remnant should come the chosen race of which our Lord Jesus Christ was to be born. God gave to Noah, the only just man in the wicked world, a revelation of His purpose ; told him how He was going to punish the sin of man by a flood, and told him also of

the means by which he should be saved, that is, by building an Ark in which he and his family might find refuge until the waters of the Flood had subsided.

Here, dear children, we learn that God seldom punishes without warning us of the punishment which is coming. Not only did God tell Noah, but God made Noah "a preacher of righteousness" to tell others, to warn them first of the sin of forgetfulness of God, of breaking His Laws, which made this fair world so unpleasing in God's sight, and then of the terrible punishment which God was about to send upon those who neglected His warnings, who practically defied their God. So it is with us. God warns us of the effect of breaking His Commandments; God tells us of the punishment which awaits those who continue to do so. Month after month, as we say our Psalter in Church, we hear read that verse, "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God*" (Ps. ix. 17). Sometimes perhaps we think that if we had lived in the time of Noah and had seen

him building the Ark and had heard him foretelling the approaching Flood, we should certainly have repented and joined him in his work. But now we hear continually preaching which tells us of that law, that all unforgiven sin must be punished, and exhorts us therefore so to repent that our sins may be blotted out in the precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,—every church building which we pass reminds us of God's claims on us; every service which we attend, I might say, every prayer that we say! And yet, how often we go on in forgetfulness of God, in the same habits of sin, which we know are so displeasing to God.

But Noah believed God's words, and showed that he believed them by setting to work *at once* to build the Ark, so that he was "*a preacher of righteousness*" as St. Peter tells us (2 St. Peter ii. 5), not only in words, but by his actions, for he showed that he believed the truth of God's revelation. It must have required, my children, no little faith, no little courage, no little perseverance to go on building the Ark. Remember,



the building occupied many years, and through all this long time the sun rose and set, the days looked fine and beautiful, just as they do now, men went on with their work and with their pleasure, people were born and died. Noah said the end was coming, yet there seemed no sign of it. It was all, dear children, just as it is now. Noah had faith, and in spite of the jeers of those who thought he was insane, he simply obeyed God's commands and went on building. He not only believed God's words, you see, but he acted on his belief, but others went their own way.

It would be very difficult to find any greater lesson—I mean, any lesson which we need more to learn—than this, the importance of *acting* on our belief. If any one were to ask us if we believed the words of Jesus Christ, I am sure that most of us would say at once, “Why, of course I do”; and we should be most indignant if any one for a moment suggested a doubt on the subject. But, dear children, if I ask you the further question, “Do you act upon your belief? Do you show your faith by doing what Jesus Christ

commands you?" you would have to hesitate, and, I am afraid, sadly say, "No; not always." If I asked you, "Do you love Jesus Christ?" you would say, "I hope so"; and then when I reminded you that almost the last thing He said before He died for you was, "*If ye love Me, keep My commandments,*" and I go on to say, "Do you keep His commandments? Are you pure and humble, honest and truthful? are you unselfish, ready to help one another and to bear willingly the Cross? What answer must you give? When people scoff at you for being religious, when your schoolfellows, perhaps, call you 'a saint' because you are trying to be good and obey Jesus Christ, do you get discouraged and give it up?" Think of all the jeers, of all the scoffs, of all the taunts that poor Noah must have heard during those long, long years that he was building the Ark! The days perhaps seemed to grow brighter and the birds to sing more joyfully as the end approached, and people pointed to this and laughed at Noah; but Noah believed and did as God had commanded, and went on

building, as my text says, "*According to all that God commanded him, so did he.*"

And so it must be with us. The faith which does not show itself in action is no real faith at all. A love which does not lead us to obey Jesus Christ is no real love at all. We must strive to "examine our lives by the rule of God's Commandments," as the Prayer-Book says, and see that in our lives we are "preachers of righteousness" to the world, that is to say, that our lives show that we believe the words of Jesus Christ.

Now this will lead us especially to three things. First, it will lead us to take great pains to keep all the rules of the Church, because Jesus Christ speaks to us through the Church, and has said that if any man "*neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican*" (St. Matt. xviii. 17). And do not think that any rules of the Church are too small for us to keep. If we are very careful about keeping the *small* rules we shall not be at all likely to break great ones; and then, my chil-

dren, remember we must keep *all* the rules of the Church, not only the pleasant ones, but the unpleasant ones. There are a great many people in our Church who keep the feasts, indeed I think everybody does. Every one tells you how lovely it is to keep Easter and Christmas as they come round in the Christian Year, but the Church equally requires us to keep the Fasts. There are a great many people who think it very wrong not to observe Sunday, but the Church requires us also to keep every Friday as a day of fasting and abstinence in memory of our Blessed Lord's Passion, and if we really love Him we shall wish not only to think about His Resurrection from the dead, but about that day of sorrow and woe when He proved His Love for us by dying for us.

Secondly, it will lead us to pray with faith and to act on our prayers, for Christ has said that "*all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive*" (St. Matt. xxi. 22). There are many who say their prayers, who do not pray "*believing,*" that is to say, do not

pray with faith that God hears and will answer their prayers according to His good Will; and there are some who think that they pray with faith who still do not act upon their prayers—I mean, do not act as though they thought their prayers would be answered. For instance, we are told in the last part of the fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel, that there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick of fever at Capernaum, at the point of death, and this nobleman, who believed in our Lord Jesus Christ's power to heal his son, tore himself away from his child's deathbed, that he might himself go to our Lord and ask Him to heal his son. He said to Jesus, "*Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way*" (St. John iv. 49, 50). I dare say you have often read these verses. I wonder whether you ever noticed what a wonderful example of faith they contain; for when our Lord said to the man, "*Go thy way; thy son liveth,*" the man was



---

so certain that his son was healed that instead of going back to his bedside in doubt and hope and fear, he stayed the night in Cana and did not start for home until the next morning; for we are told that when his servants met him, they said, "*Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.*" It is not quite certain in St. John's Gospel whether "the seventh hour" means one o'clock in the afternoon or seven o'clock in the evening, but whichever it means there would have been abundance of time for the father to have gotten home before the next morning. So that you see here we have an instance of one who prayed, and then, believing that his son was healed, acted upon that belief in not going home until the next day. My dear children, if we would only say our prayers like that; if when we pray in the morning to be delivered from some temptation or sin into which we have, perhaps, often fallen in the past, we would watch for the temptation to come with the certainty that God would give us grace to resist, then we should resist, we should conquer. But,



alas! we pray for help, but in the bottom of our heart we do not expect the help to come; we expect to fall, as we have before; and so, as our prayer is not the prayer of faith, it does not win from God the answer that God would love to give.

Thirdly, it will lead us to repent of our sins; for Christ has said, "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*" (St. Luke xiii. 3). Now repentance requires an act of the will. It consists, as you know, of three parts:—Contrition, or sorrow for sin; Confession, or acknowledgment of sin; and Satisfaction, or giving up of sin; and a repentance which stops short at being sorry for what we have done wrong is as useless as a faith which does not lead us to act upon our belief.

So you see we may learn from Noah the importance of a life in which our actions really represent our convictions; its importance to ourselves, since it was by building the Ark that Noah found a refuge and was saved; and its importance to others, since it was by building the

Ark that Noah witnessed to the world that he believed God's message of warning. It is strange, dear children, to look upon the world now and to find how many people there are who call themselves Christians and who therefore say that they believe all that Christ teaches, and yet who seem to think it of no consequence that in their lives they should entirely disregard His Commandments. Noah built the Ark in which he and his family were to be saved, but that was not its only use. It was to be, you know, a type of the Church, in which we are to be saved—a type of that Church which, however high the floods of the world may rise, always rides safely above them, and offers to those who enter her with faith a safe refuge until the storms of earth are over and the rest of Heaven is reached.

#### ANALYSIS.

I. God warned Noah of the Flood and caused him to warn others ; so God generally warns men of the results of sin.

II. Noah believed God's words and showed

---

this by at once beginning to build the Ark in spite of the unbelief of others; do we believe and act on God's Commandments? if not, our faith is worthless.

III. The obedience of faith will lead us to three things:

- i. To be very careful to keep all the rules of the Church.
- ii. To pray with faith and to act on our prayers.
- iii. To repent of our sins.

IV. To act on our faith will not only lead to our own salvation, but will also make us by our actions preachers of righteousness to others.

## IX

### *NOAH—II*

#### *THE THREE MISSIONS OF THE DOVE*

“He sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground ; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth : then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days ; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark ; and the dove came in to him in the evening ; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off : so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days ; and sent forth the dove ; which returned not again unto him any more.”—GEN. viii. 8-13.

IN reading the history of the Flood and the story of Noah, there is something particularly interesting in the episode of the sending forth of the Dove from the Ark, which after twice returning to Noah because it could find no rest, the third time found a resting-place in the restored earth.

There are several ways in which we may interpret this story so that it may teach us a useful lesson. To-day let us strive to learn from it something of the three temporal missions of the Holy Ghost, as recorded in the Bible.

I. This lesson, dear children, may not be quite so easy to understand as some of the others we have had, but it is very important that we should try to learn all we can about the work of God's Holy Spirit, by Whom we are being sanctified. The Dove, you know, is the great type of the Holy Ghost; for we are expressly told in the Bible that at our Lord's Baptism "*the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him*" (St. Luke iii. 22).

i. "*And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*" (Gen. i. 2). Here, in the very beginning of the Bible, we have the first mention of the work of the Holy Spirit. When "*the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,*" when all nature was in a state of wasteness and desolation, conflict and confusion everywhere, it was

not forsaken. The Spirit of God, Who, as our Creed tells us, is the Lord and Life-Giver, *brooded* over Chaos, for in the text "*moved upon the face of the waters*," the word which is translated "*moved upon*" really signifies the tremulous fluttering of a bird over its nest. And then, "*God said, Let there be light: and there was light*"; light to see the ruin, to see the sad condition to which the fair world had been reduced, probably by the sin of the angels; and then, as the first chapter of Genesis goes on to tell us, there was a gradual restoration and preparation of the world for man's abode.

Such is the record of the first mission of the Holy Ghost to this world. Such was the glorious work of peace and order which was accomplished through His operation in the lower kingdoms of nature.

ii. "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*" (St. Luke i. 35).



In these words, my dear children, we are told of the second great mission of the Holy Ghost ; this time not to the mere material world, but to one individual person chosen by God out of all the human race and prepared, by special gifts of grace and by long and earnest discipline and prayer, to be God's instrument in the redemption of the world. What was the condition of mankind when the Angel Gabriel, at the Annunciation, uttered these words? We learn in the fourteenth Psalm, "*They are corrupt, and become abominable in their doings ; there is none that doeth good, no not one*" (Ps. xiv. 2). The moral world had become like the material world described in the beginning of Genesis, a great chaos, a great scene of struggle and conflict, in which Evil seemed steadily to be gaining the victory over Good and in which the hope of better and brighter things was gradually becoming obscured by the dark night of human sin. And yet, hopeless as mankind seemed, it was not abandoned. That Holy Spirit Which moved upon the waters of the primeval Chaos, brooded

over the mass of humanity when out of it God took one, the Lily among the thorns, Mary, the Ever-Blessed Virgin, and the Holy Ghost overshadowed her, and "*God said, Let there be light,*" and His own dear Son stepped down into creation—He Who said of Himself that He was the Light of the world; and the Light Which thus came into the world not only revealed the darkness and confusion of sin, but began the work of Redemption.

The second time the dove came back to the Ark it was with the olive leaf in her mouth, which told Noah that the waters were beginning to abate, that God's promise was being fulfilled. The second time that the Holy Ghost came forth in His mission to the world, it was to bring to man the olive branch which told of that peace between God and man which was made through Christ, Who is indeed the Prince of Peace.

iii. "*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and*

*it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost"* (Acts ii. 1-4).

The third time the dove did not return to the Ark and to Noah, because she had found in the renewed earth that on which she could rest. And so when the Holy Ghost went forth on the third mission and came down upon the Apostles at Pentecost, He found them assembled, waiting, prepared to be the temple of the Spirit of God, and so rested upon them and *filled* them. "*The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world*" (Wisdom i. 7). At Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down to this world, never again to leave it. He finds His resting-place in the soul of man, because Jesus had prepared man for the reception of the Holy Ghost, had built up, as it were, the frame-work of the Church, and the Holy Ghost was to dwell in it, giving it life, and now indeed permanently light was to shine in the darkness and the work of Sanctification

was to begin,—to begin and to continue until the number of the Saints is made up. You know, dear children, you say in your Catechism that you learn in the Creed to believe in God the Father, who *hath made* you and all the world, in God the Son, who *hath redeemed* you and all mankind, but you say that you believe in God the Holy Ghost, who *sanctifieth* you and all the elect people of God; because, while the work of your creation was accomplished once for all, and the work of your redemption was finished by our Blessed Lord by the one offering of Himself, the work of your sanctification is ever going on through all the various channels by which the Holy Spirit of God brings grace to your soul. Jesus came to renew mankind, to make it the dwelling-place of His Holy Spirit forever.

II. But, my dear children, what the Holy Spirit has done for the world at large, that He does for each individual soul. You know, the human soul has been called a Microcosm. This is a Greek word, which means “a little world,”

because our soul is like a miniature of the great world in which we live. And so we shall see, I hope, to-day, how the history of the dealings of the Holy Spirit of God with the world of which we are a part, is also a history of His dealings with us in our own individual and personal life.

i. The Chaos which is described in the second verse of the Book of Genesis is a picture of many a sinner's soul, a conflict of passions, a struggle of good and evil, the reign of darkness. Yet that Soul is not forgotten by God; however far we may have strayed away from Him, however long we may have forgotten Him, however deeply and wilfully we may have sinned against Him, the dear Spirit of God broods over us, and at the right moment the word is spoken, "*Let there be light,*" and the first gift to the sinner is light to see his state, to realize his sin; for you know our Lord Jesus Christ told us that when the Holy Ghost was come into the world He should "*convince the world of sin*" (St. John xvi. 8), and He is the dear Spirit of peni-



tence, for it is His office to make us know, to make us feel, to make us repent of our sins. And this first gift of light, which is bestowed upon us by the operation of the Holy Spirit, gives us power to see two things: first, our sins, what we are, what we have made ourselves; and then the glorious possibilities of our life, what we might be, what God meant us to be when He created us. This must ever be the first step from sin toward God, not only to know our sins, for that knowledge alone might overwhelm us with despair, but to know the powers of holiness still hidden away in our nature, like the treasure which the man found in the field as he was plowing, and you know the Bible tells us that he went and sold all that he had and bought that field (St. Matt. xiii. 44); so that when we have this light given to us to see what we may become, we ought to be ready and willing to give up all things, that we may possess the treasure which was hidden in our nature when we were baptized.

ii. The action of the Holy Ghost in over-



---

shadowing the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation, which caused our Blessed Lord to be born of her, typifies the work of the same Blessed Spirit upon each of us in Baptism, when we are made the children of God, when the germ of a Christ-like nature is imparted to us, when Christ is, as it were, born in us. The words are spoken by God, "*Let there be light,*" not that external light before Baptism, the light of prevenient grace, which leads the sinner to that Sacrament, but that indwelling light of the abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost, which, if we are obedient to His inspirations, burns brighter and brighter, guiding us through the darkness of the world and making us often a light to other souls. Before our Baptism we were "children of wrath," as the Catechism says; by it we became the children of God, and so at peace with Him, through Christ, Who is our Peace, and here we see the olive branch, which the dove brought back the second time, symbolizing the Baptismal gift of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

iii. The gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, when He *filled* the Apostles, points to His seven-fold gift to us in Confirmation, when in that Sacrament we receive all His fulness and are equipped with the graces that we need for our battle in life, when we are strengthened for the work which God calls us to do, and Christian manhood begins; from henceforth our privilege and responsibility is to use these graces, remembering that we have all the fulness of the Holy Spirit, Who is Himself Almighty, and so realizing that we can conquer all our foes, that we can accomplish all that God gives us to do, if only our will co-operates with the grace which the Holy Spirit freely and continually offers us.

Perhaps, my dear children, I can help you to remember this sermon on the missions of the Holy Spirit to your soul, and I know it has been rather a difficult sermon for you to remember, by telling you a little story which I heard a great many years ago. It was about a clergyman in England, who used to spend his summer holidays with a friend in the

mountains of Wales. This friend had a daughter, a young girl, full of life and brightness, a favorite with every one and a great worker in her parish,—in the Sunday-school and among the poor. The priest and this young girl became great friends, but one thing which troubled him was that while she was industrious and good, and, so far as externals were concerned, was fairly religious, still she seemed to have no love for God, no consciousness of her own sinfulness. She was light-hearted and generous and kind, and did not seem ever to have a thought of the deeper things of the soul and of God. So when his holiday came to an end, as he was wishing her good-bye, he said, "I am going to ask you to promise to do something for me," and when she asked what it was he replied, "To promise that every day until I come again next year, you will say a very short prayer that I am going to teach you. Will you?" And she, in a good-natured way, said, "Oh, yes, certainly." He said, "The prayer is this: '*Lord, show me MYSELF.*'"

When he came back a year later to spend another month with his friend in the mountains, he found her quite an altered girl. The brightness was gone; she seemed very, very sad; and when he had an opportunity of talking to her alone, she said, "Oh, I said that prayer, and God has answered it and shown me myself, all my sins, my forgetfulness of God, my self-love, and I am very unhappy." The priest said, "Well, now we will change the prayer; say instead, '*Lord, show me THYSELF.*'"

When he came back the following year for his holiday, he found his young friend as bright and happy as ever before, only with a better happiness, with a truer joy, one that rested upon the love of God, one that came from a knowledge of what Christ had done for her soul. So he said to her, "Now, I am going to give you a third prayer instead of the other, one to be said to the end of your life, and that is, '*Lord, make me like Thyself.*'"

It is quite twenty years, dear children, since I heard that story, but how truly it illustrates the

teaching of the Bible about the three missions of the Holy Ghost to our souls, the three works that He has to do in our lives! First to show us ourselves, what we are, our sins; then to show us our Lord, what He is, our Saviour, how He takes away our sins and imparts to us His own Righteousness; and then in the daily work of Sanctification, how He the Holy Spirit helps us to become more and more like our Lord, for the Imitation of Christ must ever be the end of all Christian life, and can only be accomplished through the help of the Holy Ghost. Supposing, dear children, we say those prayers, that we ask the Holy Spirit to show us ourselves, that we may not deceive ourselves about our sins; to show us our Lord, so that seeing His beauty and goodness we may love Him with all our hearts, and then that He may help us in our daily lives, in our little toils and conflicts, to overcome our sins, to become more and more like Him Who, before He died for us, said, "*It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I de-*

*part, I will send him unto you*" (St. John xvi. 7).

ANALYSIS.

- I. The Dove is a type of the Holy Spirit.
  - i. Brooding over Chaos and introducing the work of Restoration.
  - ii. Overshadowing the Blessed Virgin and so accomplishing the Incarnation.
  - iii. Filling the Church at Pentecost and beginning the work of Sanctification.
- II. This is a picture of the work of the Holy Spirit with each soul.
  - i. By prevenient grace leading it to Conversion and the Sacraments.
  - ii. By Baptism imparting to it the gift of Christ Himself.
  - iii. Through all the other channels of grace continuing the work of Sanctification.
- III. The story of the three prayers.
  - i. Lord, show me *myself*.
  - ii. Lord, show me *Thyself*.
  - iii. Lord, make me like Thyself.



## X

### *ABRAHAM*

#### *PERSEVERANCE*

“And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan ; and into the land of Canaan they came.”—GEN. xii. 5.

I DARE say, my dear children, that you rather wonder why I have chosen this text out of all the many chapters in the Book of Genesis which refer to the life of Abraham. Perhaps you think it is very commonplace. Perhaps you are saying to yourselves, “If he went to go to a place, it is quite natural that he should get there.” Why should the Bible go out of its way, so to speak, to tell us such an ordinary thing? And yet I hope you will see before I have finished my sermon, that this is not only a very important text, but that it teaches us a very helpful lesson ; for it teaches, dear children, that

most useful of all lessons, Perseverance, without which all the good things that we do in our lives, all the battles we win, all the ills we suffer, all the crosses we bear, are of no avail.

Our Lord says, "*He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*" (St. Mark xiii. 13), and, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rev. ii. 10). We read in the Gospels of one who was so great and so good that he became an apostle, who gave up all things to follow our Lord Jesus Christ and who listened to His teaching for three years, and yet did not persevere to the end, and so was lost. I mean, of course, Judas Iscariot.

But let us consider the lesson which the text teaches us,—the lesson of Perseverance. How many things we begin, how few we finish! How much we plan, how little we accomplish! And why? Want of perseverance is the cause. What a wonderful life, what a useful life ours would be if we always persevered in our efforts to the very end, till we had accomplished what we were trying to do! But we do not. We are

so easily discouraged, and when difficulties arise which we had not anticipated or other work claims our attention, we just give up what we meant to do and turn to something else. This habit grows upon us, unless we are very careful, and at last makes our character weak and vacillating. How many there are with great abilities and great opportunities in their life, who might have become very great men, who failed just because they had no perseverance! Abraham was a very great man. He had many, very many gifts and virtues, but none more marked than the gift of tremendous, indomitable perseverance. What he undertook to do he did, and although, as we read his history we find that on two occasions he had to turn aside from his purpose of sojourning in Canaan, yet each time he came back to it, and he stayed there until he died.

There is another thing men want to enable them to make a success in life, and that is a definite object or goal. Abraham had as the goal of his journey the land of Canaan, which God had promised to give to him and to his seed.

Then the third step is reached when we recognize this object as one given us by God, revealed to us by His Voice, that is to say, when it becomes our vocation. Let me tell you, dear children, what we mean by a "vocation" in life. We mean this, that God has something definite for each one of us to do in this world, and that at some time or other in our life, God shows us what this work is ; that He speaks to us and calls us to a certain path in life. And then, my children, when we have heard God's Voice, we can be quite sure about our path in life, and can persevere without being daunted by any difficulties, without having any doubts.

So it was with Abraham. In his life we see not only the foundation virtue of perseverance, but the realization of an object and the recognition of a distinct call from God, all pointing in the same direction—that he was to leave his fatherland and as a stranger and pilgrim to wander forth until he came to the land of Canaan. We do not know how many difficulties Abraham had to meet, how many perils he had to pass

through, how many obstacles he had to overcome before he reached the goal of his labors. They are all passed over in the few words of the text, "*They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*"

As I have said, when to perseverance and to a realization of the goal of our life there is added a distinct call of God, everything is present to make our life truly a noble one. But even where this last is wanting, the power of perseverance and the having an object in life has led men who otherwise would probably have been quite unknown in the world to become very great.

But in addition to this one great vocation which God gives us and on which our eternity depends, there are many lesser vocations from time to time leading up to and preparing us for the great call of God. For children the first Promised Land is Knowledge,—a wonderful country; and just as the spies brought back from Eshcol that marvellous bunch of grapes which, carried upon a pole between two of them, reached to

the ground ; so children see in those older than themselves some of the wonderful fruits which may be gathered in the Promised Land of Knowledge. But it is a difficult country to reach. You all know, do you not, dear children, how hard it is continually to study, not only to study those things which are pleasant and easy, but those lessons which are hard and seem uninteresting, and yet which you are told are so important ? But you must persevere, you must work away, you must let it be said of you, of each thing you begin to learn, “ *They went forth to go into the land of Canaan ; and into the land of Canaan they came.*”

Then, secondly, there is self-conquest. The next land which you have to obtain possession of is the land of your own soul, of your own nature. You know how the Israelites found Canaan in the possession of seven strong nations, whom it took them years and years to conquer, and who, after they had partially conquered them, rose in rebellion and threw off their yoke and brought them into captivity. Indeed there is one book



of the Bible—the Book of Judges—which is one long story of the captivity of the Israelites to one after another of these strong foes in the land of Canaan. And so you have to conquer many faults in order that you may gain possession of the land of your own nature. First there are the sins which you have inherited. Then there are the wicked or weak tendencies of the temperament, or peculiar moral constitution with which God has endowed you, and then there are the Seven Nations of Canaan, the seven deadly sins—Anger, Pride, Gluttony, Lust, Avarice, Envy, and Sloth, each with its stronghold in your heart; and Jericho, the besetting sin which has to be conquered first, and which is the hardest to overcome. In this conflict the great thing you need is perseverance, never to give up until the last foe in you is overthrown, until you have won the Promised Land, until you have enthroned as its King our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may rule and guide all your life.

Then lastly, there is your life work, the special

work to which you are called. Choose it with prayer and careful consideration; listen for God's Voice to guide you in your choice, and when you have heard that Voice, do not change. Persevere, and whatever your hand findeth to do, do it with all your might. Persevere until life's work is done, life's reward is won.

But all these lesser vocations lead to one supreme goal, Heaven itself. All else is insignificant in comparison with this. All those other countries which have to be conquered, the realm of Intellect, the realm of Morals, the realm of the World, all lead up to the supreme reward in the possession of the Promised Land of Heaven. About this vocation there can be no doubt that God has called you. About this road there can be no question that our Lord has said to you, "Follow Me"; for this road leads to that Throne in Heaven of which He says, "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne*" (Rev. iii. 21). But that we may reach this glorious

end we need the greatest of all gifts—the gift of final perseverance, and that we may obtain it, let me give you, dear children, two simple rules. First, pray for it, for it is one of the gifts that we cannot merit, but which God loves to give us in answer to prayer; and second, never give up any spiritual exercise which you have once begun. Never, because you are tired of it or because it seems to have ceased to help you, give up your Bible reading, or your prayers, or your confessions, or your communions, or anything you have ever begun for the glory of God and the good of your soul, and you will persevere and gain possession of your Canaan, Heaven itself.

#### ANALYSIS.

In this text we learn the great lesson of Perseverance. One of Abraham's greatest gifts, one without which all others are useless.

I. We may observe three things in the text :

i. Perseverance.

ii. An object in life.

---

iii. God's call.

II. Lesser vocations lead up to the one great vocation. For children there are three lands of Canaan to be reached.

i. Knowledge.

ii. Self-conquest.

iii. The work of life.

III. All these help to bring us to the great goal, the promised land, Heaven itself;—in order to reach it, that we may persevere :

i. Pray continually for final perseverance.

ii. Never give up any spiritual exercise that you have begun.

## XI

### *LOT*

#### *THE DANGERS OF WORLDLINESS*

“And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked : (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)”—2 St. PETER ii. 7-8.

IF we had not these inspired words of St. Peter to help us, I think, dear children, that we should perhaps have made a mistake in forming our opinion of Lot. If we had only the Old Testament story, we might have thought him a wicked man, like those among whom he dwelt, but these words tell us (and they come to us with all the force of inspiration) that Lot, even with all the sin that he saw around him in Sodom, was still a just and a righteous man, and vexed his righteous soul from day to day at the

(118)

wickedness of the men of Sodom. And while what St. Peter says would, of course, have been sufficient for us, we may also remember that God sent two angels to deliver Lot from the wicked city of Sodom before He destroyed it, and God does not send angels to take care of wicked people, so that there can be no doubt that Lot was a good man.

But though he was good, he had one great besetting sin—Covetousness, an inordinate love of riches. We are told (Gen. xiii. 6) that he and his uncle Abraham were very rich and had so many flocks and herds that they were obliged to separate in order to find pasture for all their cattle. Abraham generously gave Lot his choice, and said: "*Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left*" (Gen. xiii. 9). Now Lot should have remembered that he was the younger, and so should have deferred to Abraham and asked him to choose first, but he seems



to have thought only of himself and his own interest, and chose what seemed to him the very best place—"all the plain of the Jordan," for it was well watered everywhere; and he "*pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly*" (Gen. xiii. 12, 13).

Now, my dear children, let us carefully consider what his choice involved. Lot was rich, he had plenty, but in order to become much richer he ran a very great risk, for he went and lived among very wicked people, where he was all the time surrounded by the most dreadful sin. He did not join in the sins of these people; no, we are told that he hated these sins and vexed his soul from day to day about them, *but*—he went on living there. There are a great many people in the world in the present day who are very much like Lot—people who are good themselves and who wish to continue good, but who for love of money and in order to get on in the world are willing to run dreadful risks by working in very bad places and among very

wicked people and at very dangerous employments, and the result is that, though they mean to continue good, they very often become bad themselves. The sin they see around them at first vexes them, as we are told it vexed Lot, but gradually they get used to it and then after a while come even to like it and to do the same things themselves as they see other people do. Now this great temptation, my dear children, often comes to young people when they first go out to work in the world. They find, perhaps, that they can earn a little more in a bad place than in a good place, that they can get paid a little higher wages to work in a place where the money is made dishonestly, where it is made by misrepresenting the value of the goods sold—and they have to take part in this dishonesty, to lie about the things they sell, to say that they are better than they really are—so they see committed daily the two sins of lying and cheating, and they perhaps come at last to join in these things rather than go to a place where they could not get so much money, but where their souls

would be protected from this sort of sin. Or, worse still, sometimes they work where it is almost impossible to retain their self-respect and purity. Perhaps it is good pay there, but remember the question our Lord asks: "*What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" (St. Matthew xvi. 26).

God is very good to us in sending us many warnings when we are going in the wrong path, if we will only listen to His Voice, only learn by His visitations. You remember how, when our Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, as He turned the angle in the road across the Mount of Olives and first caught sight of the city across the valley of the Kedron, He wept over it. Why? Because its people "knew not the time of their visitation." He was going to enter that city and to preach in it and to warn it of its impending doom, but He saw that the people would not listen, for they could not realize that this was indeed "the time of their visitation." And so God, in His great mercy, sent Lot a warning. We read in the four-

teenth chapter of Genesis that Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, with three other Kings made war on the King of Sodom and his neighbors and overthrew them, and took Lot captive and all his goods and carried them away. What must have been Lot's reflections! All that he had, lost! and he himself a slave! Oh, if he had stayed with Abraham! But by God's mercy and Abraham's courage, he was rescued. No sooner did Abraham hear of this than he armed his own trained servants, and with his friends Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, pursued after the kings, conquered them and brought back Lot and all his possessions.

Now surely, this was a warning to Lot of the danger of living in Sodom, and one would think that after Abraham's generous behavior Lot would not wish again to leave him. But what did he do? He did not seem to see the warning, and so he went back to Sodom and lived there amid all its sin until the time when God destroyed it. How often this is so with covetous people! Some great calamity happens, ruin

threatens them, and they think that if they only may be delivered from this one great difficulty, they will do so differently, they will run no more risks, they will venture on no more speculations. But, alas! too often, when God in His mercy helps them, they forget the time of difficulty and the resolutions they made then, and they go back to the same danger.

Then comes the end. God determines to destroy Sodom, but in His great love sends two angels to save Lot. The morning of the terrible day dawns, and the angels hurry Lot and his wife and his two daughters out of the city. Lot's wife looks back to the burning city, with regret at leaving it, and is turned into a pillar of salt. He intercedes for the little city of Zoar and pleads that that may be spared as a place of refuge for him. But at last he has learned the lesson and feels that he is not secure, even in Zoar, and so he makes his way to the mountains and dwells there in a cave, with his two daughters,—the rich chieftain, who in his desire to become richer has lost everything, flocks and herds,

servants and money, wife and sons, all destroyed, his only home a cave in the mountains, his life only saved! He had his warning when he was delivered from the Elamites, but he did not take it, and now this is the end!

My children, let us learn from the story of Lot the danger of living among bad people, of making them our friends and companions. Better to be poor and holy than to be rich at the risk of your souls; better to have no friends than to have for your friends those who are not the friends of God.

#### ANALYSIS.

The Second Epistle of St. Peter throws the light of Inspiration on the character of Lot.

- i. A righteous man, but with a strong besetting sin, Covetousness.
- ii. It leads him to a selfish choice, and one which exposes him to great danger.
- iii. God sends him a warning, but he goes back to Sodom.



---

iv. Finally in the destruction of Sodom two angels are sent to save Lot's life, but he loses all his possessions.

A warning against working at sinful occupations or among wicked people for the sake of making more money.

## XII

### HAGAR

#### THE PRESENCE OF GOD

“Thou God seest me.”—GEN. xvi. 13.

“*Thou God seest me.*” I think, my dear children, that there are probably very few texts in the Old Testament which are so familiar as this, very few words of the Bible which every one knows as well as they know these words; yet I venture to think that there are very few who could tell me who it was that said them. Was it some great saint, like Abraham, the Friend of God, who proved his devotion to God by his obedience, first in leaving his country at God’s call, then in offering up his son Isaac at God’s command? Or was it Jacob, the Prince of God, who wrestled all night with the angel at Jabbok, and saw God face to face at Peniel? Or was it

MOSES, the leader of God's chosen people, the hero of the wanderings in the wilderness? Or was it David, the man after God's own heart, who wrote those beautiful Psalms which we say or sing so often in the services of the Church? But no, for then it would have been of little help to us, for then we might have thought, "Yes, God sees and cares for great saints like Abraham and Jacob and Moses and David, because they were so great and good and holy, because they did so much to show their love for God; but for me—insignificant, sinful, disobedient me—does God really care for me? is His Eye always watching over me?" And what is the answer? Who spoke these words? Not a great saint, not a great hero, but a poor Egyptian slave-girl, Hagar. Her mistress was jealous of her and had treated her very harshly. Her life had become unendurable, as many a slave's life, I suppose, has before, and so she ran away from her mistress, ran away from home, ran off into the wilderness—perhaps to die, for what could a poor girl do alone in a great desert?

When people crossed that desert they went in caravans, carrying on their camels provisions and skins filled with water, that they might not die of hunger and thirst ; but she had nothing. She ran away, and coming to a well of water, she sat down there in her misery, and an angel from God came to her—came to her and told her to return and submit herself to her mistress, and promised her as a reward that she should have a son who should be the founder of a great nation ; told her, that is, to go back and do her duty in the state of life unto which God's Providence had called her ; told her to take up her cross, to bear her trials, and that her reward should be that she, a poor slave, should be the mother of a mighty nation. That promise, dear children, was made nearly four thousand years ago, and to-day wherever we find the Arabs wandering through those deserts of Egypt and Syria and Arabia we see its fulfilment, for Hagar's son Ishmael, you know, was the founder of the Arabian nation.

What a great lesson Hagar teaches us ! The

lesson of God's watchful Providence; of His tireless Eye upon us, of His tender care for us, when even the sorrows of a poor slave-girl do not escape His notice—when one of those bright Spirits who wait around His Throne is sent to comfort and strengthen Hagar, to tell her what to do, and to promise her so great a reward. Surely, then, these words must be full of comfort and help to us, for however poor or humble or sinful we may be, we can hardly be worse off than poor Hagar was; and God saw her sorrows, and therefore sees ours, and is ready, if only we ask Him in prayer, to help us.

Now, there are four times in your life, my children, when I think it would be a special help to you to say these words of Hagar, "*Thou God seest me.*" First, when you are exposed to great temptations, when you feel the Evil One near you, trying to lead you to do what is wrong; when perhaps your very companions are endeavoring to lead you astray, are suggesting to you some sinful act, are trying to draw you into some wrong conversation or en-

deavoring to persuade you to tell a lie to save you or them from blame—then think of God's Presence; then say those words of Hagar "*Thou God seest me,*" or those words of Joseph, "*How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" (Gen. xxxix. 9). Think of God's Eye upon you, watching to see what you will do, to see whether you will remember Him—ready to send, if need be, angel guardians to help you and strengthen you. Yes, in time of temptation, when sin is all around, there is no text, I think, my children, better for you to say than the words "*Thou God seest me.*"

Secondly, it is not only in time of temptation that you can say these words most helpfully, but also in any time of trouble or sorrow or struggle. Hagar, when she said them, was in great sorrow, fleeing from the burden of a very heavy cross; and at some time or other of your lives you must expect to feel sorrow. Ah, even while you are still children sorrow will perhaps touch your hearts; for Sorrow is the King in this world, and sooner or later every one feels



his sceptre. How soon the childish face is bathed in tears! how soon upon the memory is plowed the recollection of sorrow! But in our sorrows, what can be so great a comfort, so great a help, as to think that God sees us! God, our Heavenly Father, Who loves us, Who has taught us by His Apostle Saint Peter that we may cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us. When you are in great sorrow, dear children, say these words, "Thou God seest me; Thou knowest my sorrow, Thou knowest how hard it is for me to bear it, Thou hast sent it to me in love as a Cross and with it Thou wilt send me grace to bear it. O Lord, I do not say, Take it away, but, Thy Will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven."

Thirdly, this text is a great help in time of Prayer. Most of you know how hard it is to pray; how, with the very best intentions, our thoughts will wander, and the world, with our work and play, our sorrows and joys, will come crowding into our mind and calling our attention away from God. The great help, the great

remedy in such a case must be the realization of God's Presence, the saying, and more—the *feeling*, "*Thou God seest me.*" It would be a good thing, dear children, always to begin your prayers with these words—before you kneel down and begin to speak to God, to put yourself in His Presence—to say, "*Thou God seest me.*" And then again, when perhaps in the midst of your prayers you find your thoughts have gone astray, to bring them back by repeating this text. And it is good to do this not only in your private prayers, but also in your prayers in Church.

Lastly, we all have to make difficult decisions in our life, to make up our minds about small things almost every day, and sometimes about very great things, on which our whole future life may very much depend. Then again is the time to say this text, "*Thou God seest me,*" for we find in the thirty-second Psalm and the ninth verse God's promise, "*I will inform thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go : and I will guide thee with mine eye.*" A de-

cision made in God's Presence is sure to be a right decision, for when we feel the consciousness of that Eye, it guides us in the way that God would have us to go.

You must not think it hard, my dear children, to have to remember God's Presence, for it ought to be the great joy of your life here, as it will be the great joy of your life hereafter; for you know that Heaven is simply life in God's Presence, and the best preparation we can make for Heaven will be to cultivate the recollection of that Presence now. Indeed, this gives us a foretaste of the very joys of Heaven. "*Thou God seest me.*" Let this be our motto on earth, in temptation, in trial, in prayer, in difficulty, in sorrow and in joy, and it will be our happiness, our glory in Heaven, not only that God will then see us, as He does now, but that we shall see Him, and that waking up after His Likeness, we shall be satisfied with it.

---

ANALYSIS.

These were not the words of a great saint, but of a poor Egyptian slave girl, Hagar, at a time when she was in great distress. They teach us the great lesson of God's care for us.

There are four times when these words should be specially helpful to us :

- i. In temptation to sin.
- ii. In trial and sorrow.
- iii. In time of Prayer.
- iv. In time of difficulty.

To cultivate a sense of God's Presence here is the best preparation for our life in Heaven hereafter.

## XIII

### *MELCHIZEDEK*

#### *THE GIFTS AND CLAIMS OF THE CHURCH*

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine : and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth : and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.”—GEN. xiv. 18-20.

ONE of the most mysterious persons in Old Testament History is the Priest-King Melchizedek. He suddenly appears as Abraham is returning from his victorious expedition against Chedorlaomer and his confederates, and blesses Abraham, giving him bread and wine and receiving from him a tithe of all the spoil that Abraham had taken. We are told a good deal about Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and what we are told there seems to shroud him in

an atmosphere of even greater mystery, for we are told that the meaning of his name is "King of Righteousness," and that his title, King of Salem, means "King of Peace," that he was without father, without mother, and without descent, and that he was a Type of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who "*abideth a priest continually*" (Heb. vii. 2, 3).

Now Melchizedek seemed to some people so mysterious that they thought he was not a real man. They thought it very improbable that Jerusalem should have been called Salem as far back as the time of Melchizedek, and still more improbable that it should have been ruled over by one who was at the same time its King and its Priest. And so people who have more faith in their own cleverness than in the truth of God's Word thought that the story of Melchizedek was imaginary, a sort of fable or parable, and not to be taken as a real event.

But the most wonderfully interesting and important discovery that has ever been made in Biblical archæology took place in the year 1887,



just seven years ago, when some explorers began to dig into a mound on the east side of the River Nile, between Thebes and Cairo, at a place called Tel-el-Amarna, and unearthed the capital of the last two kings of the Eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty. Their names were Amenophis III. and IV. After digging away at the city for some time they came across the place in which were kept the records of the kingdom. These were not written on parchment, as we write them in our days. If they had been, they would long since have turned to dust and been lost, but in those days they wrote upon clay tablets, in a sort of hand writing which we call "Cuneiform," from the Latin word for a wedge, because the letters are made up of a number of wedge-shaped or arrow-headed signs. I do not think, dear children, that I should advise you all to go to work and learn that language, because, though it is very interesting, I think you would find it rather difficult. Some of you may remember how long it took you to learn your own alphabet of twenty-six letters, but the Cuneiform al-

phabet is made up of nearly five hundred different characters, each of which has at least two different phonetic values, that is, two different sounds, and besides this, each character may be used, as we call it, "ideographically," that is, to denote an object or an idea, so that you see people who learned the Babylonian Cuneiform method of writing had to work a good deal harder than we do to learn to read our own language.

Well, among the clay tablets were found a great number of reports from the different governors or vassal kings of the surrounding countries, which were subject to Egypt, the most interesting to us being some letters from Ebed-Tob, Priest and King of Jerusalem. He tells us that he was unlike any other Egyptian governor in Canaan in that he had been appointed or confirmed in his post, not by Pharaoh, but by the Oracle and Power of THE GREAT KING, the God, that is to say, whose Sanctuary stood on the summit of Moriah. He tells us that it was not from his father or his mother that he inherited his dig-

nity, but that he was King of Jerusalem because he was the Priest of its God.

These letters have been buried almost from the time they were written, that is, about 3,500 years ago, and now that they have been dug up they explain to us what is said about Melchizedek, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, about his being without father and without mother, about his being at once Priest and King. They show us that up to that time, if not later, Jerusalem was governed by a royal Priest whose title and office was like Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham returning from his victory and received from him, as was his right, a tenth of the spoil. In the Cuneiform inscription the word Jerusalem means "City of Peace." It was the Sanctuary of the God of Peace, and its Priest and King was a Type of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was to come to us as the Prince of Peace. So that when you read the story of Melchizedek, you will be able to feel that there is no story in the Old Testament which rests upon stronger evidence. Ebed-Tob must have lived just about

midway between the time of Abraham and that of Moses, that is, about 200 years, perhaps, after the time of Melchizedek. And then, another little lesson that we may learn just in passing: that it is generally safer to trust the Bible than the clever people who think they know so much more about what happened in those days than those who lived in those times and who wrote the Bible.

We are expressly told in the Epistle to the Hebrews that Melchizedek was a Type of Christ, and especially of Him in His Priestly Office; that Christ remaineth a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, that is, that although the Christian Priest now stands at the Altar and celebrates the Divine Mysteries and offers the Eternal Sacrifice, yet it is only as the Representative of Christ. He it is who is the True Priest at the Altar, Who is at once Priest and Victim, and Who gives to us, as He did to His Apostles on the last night of His Life, His own Body and Blood.

Now, dear children, I want you to learn two

things from the story of Melchizedek. First, what it is that the Church gives to you; and then, secondly, what you are bound to give to the Church.

Melchizedek blessed Abraham and gave him bread and wine as a Type of the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, which the True Melchizedek, our Lord Himself, gives to us in the Holy Communion. And never forget what That is—the Greatest of all gifts to us. Nothing that the world can give us, nothing that the world possesses is so great. Without It no Life, no Strength, no Peace, no Joy, no Love; with It we have all things, because we have Christ, Who is All. And then remember you can get It nowhere else than in the Church. I hope none of you would ever be likely to join any of the Sects. If you did, you would not have the Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps you may be thinking, “But the Sects say they have the Holy Communion.” No, my children, God has been very good in preserving them from saying what is not true. They say that they give you



bread and wine in commemoration of the Death of our Lord, but they none of them pretend that that Bread and Wine is the Real Body and Blood of Christ. Only the Church, which has a valid Priesthood, can give That. So, then, first you are to learn from Melchizedek what is the Greatest of all the Gifts of the Church to her children, the Gift of the Blessed Sacrament.

Secondly, you can learn from that story your own duty to the Church. Melchizedek gave to Abraham the bread and wine; Abraham gave to Melchizedek tithes of all that he possessed. There is nothing more clear in the Bible than the duty of giving to God one-tenth of all that we have. We find it not only mentioned in the case of Abraham and others, as a thing which they did; we find it as part of the direct commandment of God. In the third chapter of the Book of Malachi we read that when the Jews had become very negligent in this duty, God sent to them the Prophet Malachi, and he said: "*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In*



*tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. iii. 8-11).*

Now here you see what God calls the sin of neglecting to give one-tenth of our means to God. He calls it “robbing God.” We think it a great sin to rob our fellow-man. A man who robs another is put in prison and punished, or has to run away and leave the country, and God tells us that those who rob Him in this way will not escape without punishment, either in this world or in the world to come. But not only does God tell Malachi to warn people about the consequences of neglecting their duty in almsgiving, but also to promise them that if they perform that duty He will most abundantly bless them,—as the words which I have

just read you say: "*Prove me, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*"

Begin, dear children, to make this rule of almsgiving now. Of all your pocket-money put by one-tenth, however little that may be, for God and His poor, and then all through your life keep this rule, and God will bless you. Remember what the Church does for you, What the Church gives you—all that is worth having in this world, all that can make life happy—and remember also that the Church cannot do her work among the poor and needy without your help, and so gladly give a fixed part of that which God gives to you, and in giving remember that no money can be so well invested as that which is spent in God's service.

#### ANALYSIS.

The discovery at Tel-el-Amarna of the letters of one of Melchizedek's successors, Ebed-Tob, King of Jerusalem.

---

Melchizedek was a Type of Christ, Who is the True King and Priest of Salem, our Great High Priest, the Prince of Peace.

Two lessons from Melchizedek.

- i. What the Church gives you—the Blessed Sacrament.
- ii. What you must give the Church—a tenth of all that God bestows upon you.

## XIV

### ISAAC

#### *THE PRIVILEGE OF SUFFERING*

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac : and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called : accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure.”—HEB. xi. 17-20.

IF I were to ask you, my dear children, what was the principal event in the life of Isaac, I do not doubt you would say, and rightly, his being offered to God as a Sacrifice by his father Abraham. But why was it such an important event, when he was only offered in will, not in deed ? for, as you know, God sent an angel to stay Abraham's hand, and showed him a ram caught in the thicket by its horns, which was really sacrificed in Isaac's place. Why do you suppose it was so important an event ? Because it

was a great prophecy *in act* of the Redemption of the world through our Lord—of the great Sacrifice which was to be offered upon Mount Calvary for the sins of all the world.

You have often seen the Acolytes light up the Altar before the High Celebration on Sunday. For whom is it done? It is to tell you that He is coming, Who is the Light of the world, and as candle after candle is lighted it is a preparation for the coming of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, Who is Light of Light, God of God. And so it was in the history of the world from the time of the Fall to our Lord's First Advent. It was a period of deep darkness, so far as faith and goodness were concerned, and each prophecy and each type was like the lighting of one more candle on the great Altar of Creation, one more light to make the darkness a little less, to point a little more clearly to the coming of that Light Who "*lighteth every man that cometh into the world*" (St. John i. 9); the dawning of that Sun of Righteousness before Whose Presence all darkness must hie away. And hence we see

the great importance of those characters who were types of Christ, in that they not only pointed to His Coming, but foreshadowed the character of His Life and Work.

But I do not mean to talk to you about Isaac as a Type of Christ to-day, so much as to point out to you the example he sets us of patient suffering, of leaving ourselves absolutely in God's hands because we realize that God is so wise and loves us so much that whatever He sends us must be for our good.

But let us take up the story. In the twenty-second chapter of Genesis we are told that God said to Abraham: "*Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him*" (Gen. xxii. 2, 3).



What a terrible command this must have seemed to Abraham! God had given him in his old age Isaac, and had promised that through him all nations should be blessed, and now God commanded him with his own hand to kill Isaac, to make it, humanly speaking, impossible that that promise should ever be fulfilled. Abraham found it hard when he became an old man to have no son, but how much harder, after Isaac had twined himself, as it were, around his heart—how much harder, not only to part with him, but that he, his father, should strike the blow which should take his life! And yet it is evident that Abraham did not hesitate for one moment in his obedience, did not even try to put off as long as possible the fatal moment. No, we are told that he “*rose up early in the morning.*” His obedience was prompt, as well as thorough. There was no complaining. He believed in God so fully that he was sure what God commanded must be right, and, dear children, what I want you to notice particularly (because I find people

generally have a very mistaken idea about Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac) is that the Epistle to the Hebrews in my text tells us very clearly that in offering up Isaac he was sure "*that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*" (Heb. xi. 19); so that he did not sacrifice him feeling he was to lose him forever, but in the perfect faith that in some marvellous manner God would raise him up from the dead and give him back to him. So Abraham shows his faith in the Resurrection.

On the third day of their journey Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off, and telling his servants to stay there, he laid the wood upon Isaac his son, and himself taking the fire and the knife, they went both of them together. Here we have a picture and type of our Lord bearing His Cross up Mount Calvary. And then Isaac asked of his father the natural question, "*Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*" and Abraham said, "*My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.*" Ah, how true it was, "God will provide a

Lamb!" Abraham thought, as he uttered the words, of Isaac as the lamb. God sent, as you know, dear children, a ram caught by its horns in a thicket to take the place of Isaac, and it was from that event that Abraham called the place "Jehovah-jireh,"—"The Lord will provide." But how much more true was it in the far future! Little did Abraham know the great prophecy he was uttering, and that God would provide a Lamb—His Own Dear Son—to take the place of all those poor lambs which year after year were offered at the Paschal Feast; to take the place of all poor sinners; to make the one sufficient atonement and expiation for all the sins of the world.

*"And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood" (Verse 9).* Isaac learned then who was to be the lamb. Here again we have a type of our Blessed Lord in the passive obedience of Isaac. There were no complaints, there was no

struggle. Like Him to Whom he pointed, "*he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth*" (Isa. liii. 7).

Now this brings me to the lesson that I want you especially to learn to-day from the story of Isaac—resignation to God's Will in suffering. All suffering, my children, is the result of sin (though not necessarily the sin of the one who suffers), and part of its penance, by which satisfaction is made to the Justice of God. It is a Law of God that sin must be punished, either in this world or in the world to come; not an arbitrary law, but like all God's Laws, necessary, that is, it could not be otherwise. We know that if we break the laws of Nature we must suffer; that if we put our hand in the fire it will burn us, that if we fall over a precipice we shall be killed; and so it is in Moral Nature, for the Laws of the Material and the Moral Kingdoms are both God's Laws. But all the sufferings of the world taken together were quite insufficient to make any satisfaction to the Justice of God,

until Christ came, and "by His Oblation of Himself once offered" made "a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Now while He has done the great Work and by His Cross and Passion has made satisfaction for our sins, He still allows us, for our good, to bear some suffering; just as He now "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25), and yet calls upon us, in our poor prayers for one another, to join Him in this great work of Intercession. So St. Peter tells us that He "*suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*" (1 St. Peter ii. 21). We see this in a figure in our Lord's own Cross-bearing, for while like Isaac the Cross was laid upon Him and He bore it, yet He allowed Simon of Cyrene at the last to bear it after Him. So St. Paul says, writing to the Colossians: I "*rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church*" (Col. i. 24). We should try to remember this, dear

children, that all our sufferings have to do with sin, and that if they are borne patiently, and lovingly offered to God in union with the Sufferings of Christ, they are acceptable to Him and form part of that great Treasure of Sufferings by which sin is expiated.

Hence suffering is a privilege, first because it unites us to Christ and makes us more like the Man of Sorrows, because it is the means by which we take up our Cross and follow Him; and then also because it is through suffering that we are to be sanctified. It is in the furnace of affliction that we are to be tried and the dross burned out of us, that we may be pure gold, fit for Christ's Kingdom in Heaven. Suffering has not always this result. Sometimes it only sours and embitters those who suffer. Often we see a suffering child who is only made peevish and discontented by its pains. But sometimes it is otherwise, and beneath the suffering frame the light of Sanctity shines forth with the beauty of a will lovingly resigned to God's Will, the glory



---

of a life spent in patiently suffering, in gently bearing the Cross which God has sent.

Most of you, dear children, I suppose know little of suffering beyond the name; know little of pain, either of body or mind or soul. But it is almost sure to come to you. Suffering will enter your life, and then you must try like Isaac to leave yourself in the hands of God, and only to ask for grace that you may patiently suffer His Will, joining your little pains with the Pains which our Lord endured for you on the Cross, and by which your sufferings become precious in His sight. Many people look upon pain as though it were a mark of God's anger, as though it were the one great evil of the world. No, dear children, the only evil is sin, not pain. Try to understand what suffering means; that since Christ suffered it is a great privilege, a means of union with Him, a means of sanctity to ourselves; and so now, while you are young and happy and free from suffering, learn its true laws, that when it is God's Will to send you the Cross you may cheerfully bear it for His sake.

---

ANALYSIS.

I. Prophecies and types pointed to and prepared for Christ.

II. Abraham's trial of faith in sacrificing Isaac was prompt and thorough, but with a belief that God would raise him from the dead.

III. i. Isaac bearing the wood up the mountain a type of our Lord bearing His Cross.

ii. Isaac bound to the wood and uncomplaining a type of our Lord as described in Isaiah liii. 7.

IV. All suffering is the result of sin, part of its penance. Our Lord made the one full Satisfaction on the Cross, but calls us to follow His steps of suffering and to join Him in this work.

Suffering is therefore a privilege; because if rightly borne:

i. It unites us to Christ.

ii. It becomes a means of sanctification.

## XV

### *ESAU*

#### *MAN'S ADMIRATION, GOD'S AVERSION*

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”—Rom. ix. 13.

THIS text at first sight raises a very difficult question—why God should love Jacob but hate Esau. For as we read the story of Esau and Jacob, Jacob's character is so full of faults, so mean, so unattractive, while Esau seems so frank and generous, such a “thorough gentleman,” as we would say, the very ideal of a man of the world, endowed with great natural virtues and splendid gifts, courageous, good natured, a daring huntsman, a brave warrior, just what the world admires! And yet God says, “*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*” Let us see, dear children, if we can find the cause of God's aversion to Esau.

Esau was hateful to God because when God endowed him so abundantly with gifts and graces, when he owed so much to God, he utterly forgot God and neglected altogether to serve Him.

(I.) Is anything more shameful than ingratitude? And what was there that Esau possessed that had not been God's gift to him?

(i.) First, God had given him great natural gifts of mind and body and soul. He seems to have been handsome in person, strong and skilful with his weapons in the chase, good-natured and open in his dealings with men, a general favorite.

(ii.) Then God had given him great opportunities. He was the eldest son of a great prince, and he inherited the Birthright which his ancestors had prized so dearly, but which he despised so that he sold it to his brother, in derision, for a mess of pottage.

(iii.) Thirdly, God had given him, to help him, good examples; a pious father—for Isaac was a truly religious man, a man of prayer and faith—

and a religious home, and yet with all this Esau grew up the very type of a thoroughly irreligious man. He cared not for God or His Promises; the neglected to serve Him, he lived for the world and for self.

(II.) Again, Esau was hateful to God because of his evil influence and example, for the very fact of his natural virtues and gifts made his example so much more attractive to those around him. He was not without natural affection, he seems really to have loved his old father, but everything about Esau was simply of the gifts of nature, and the endowments of grace he despised and rejected. It was easy for Esau to live what the world would call a good life, just as it is easy for some worldly men now to live moral lives, because their temperament helps them and Satan takes care that they shall have very few temptations to lead them astray, for he well knows that worldly men who live good, moral lives are his best advertisements. But God cares not for natural virtues, but for those which are the outcome of His Grace.

And so we have the contrast between the two brothers, Jacob and Esau. Jacob, with strong besetting sins, with a naturally unattractive temperament, with a habit of duplicity formed early in life and the inheritance of the sin of Covetousness, and yet with a great realization of the beauty of religion, with a strong desire to serve God, with wonderful perseverance endeavoring to overcome his sins, and with great patience enduring the trials and sorrows which came to him in such abundance as a punishment for those sins. In Esau we have a naturally attractive character without religion, without grace, without God ; in Jacob one who in his early life was led into serious sin, though he did his best, to the very end of his days, to overcome his faults. Esau, a man who desired to possess God's most generous gifts without God ; Jacob, a man with much fewer gifts, but who strove with all his might to possess God, to gain the blessing of God.

So with children. It is not always those who are most attractive that God loves best, not



always those who are bright and amiable and cheerful and pleasing to their companions and to their older friends, who are pleasing to God ; for they may do it simply in the power of the gifts with which God endowed them when they were born, or they may strive to please others only to win their praise and so to gratify their own pride and self-love. There are many children who seem rather stupid and have great difficulty in learning their lessons and are probably awkward in their appearance, but who say their prayers and wish to be pure and good, and these are the ones whom God loves.

But before we finish our sermon, let us compare Esau with three of the men whose lives are recorded in the Book of Genesis. And first, with Lot. Lot, as I told you when I was preaching to you about him, was a good man with one strong besetting sin—the sin of worldliness, the love of money. Esau is the very type of worldliness, though not perhaps so much in love of money as in love of popularity and the praise of men. Lot with all his worldliness still loved

God and wished to serve Him, and so God in His mercy sent Lot a great trial—took away all his possessions, for you remember that he had to flee from Sodom and take refuge in a cave in the mountains, leaving behind all that he possessed. God sent Lot a great trial in this life, by which his love of the world was entirely overcome, and he died in poverty, but with his soul clinging to God, and, as we know from St. Peter, he was saved. Esau, on the other hand, possessed his worldly goods to the end of his life, grew richer and more successful and powerful and founded a great nation, the Edomites, and died; but St. Paul tells us, quoting from the Prophet Malachi (chapter i. verse 3), that God hated Esau. How terrible it must be in another world to be the object of God's aversion, to be lost forever!

But I do not wish you, dear children, to think that goodness is incompatible with prosperity in this world, and so the other two men with whom we will contrast Esau shall be two upon whom God showered abundant gifts of wealth in this life, and yet who were quite unworldly, who

were two of his greatest Saints. I mean Abraham and Joseph. We are told that Abraham was very rich and that God prospered him so abundantly that his riches immensely increased, and yet we know that Abraham was not covetous, for he allowed his nephew Lot to choose the best pasturage when he as the elder had the right of choice, and when the King of Sodom offered to give him all the spoils that he had taken in his victory over Chedorlaomer—and of course they belonged to Abraham by right of conquest—he refused to touch any himself and gave back all his share to the King of Sodom. So Abraham, while he was very rich, did not live for money, was not worldly, and we know that his whole life was spent in serving God.

And then Joseph, after he was made ruler of Egypt, became a very rich man, and he, we know, thought far more of doing good and relieving distress and feeding the hungry than he did of making money, so that we see that if we serve God first, God will bless us; indeed we learn this both from the Old and the New Testa-

ments, for, as I reminded you in my sermon on Melchizedek, God said by the Prophet Malachi that if we give Him tithes He will open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing upon us, and our Lord Jesus Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (St. Matthew vi. 33).

So we may learn from Esau that if God has given us great natural gifts it is that we may use them in His service, but that natural gifts can never in God's sight take the place of works that are done in the power of His Grace; and we are warned too of the danger of resting satisfied with worldly popularity instead of striving to please God, and so to win His Love.

#### ANALYSIS.

Jacob seems so unattractive, Esau so generous; why then did God love Jacob and hate Esau?

I. Because of his ingratitude. God had given him:

- 
- i. Great natural gifts of mind and body and soul.
  - ii. Great opportunities in life.
  - iii. Good examples.

II. Because of the attractiveness of his evil example.

III. The contrast between the naturally beautiful character without religion, and the naturally mean character with it.

IV. Esau was a contrast:

- i. To Lot; both loved the world, but Lot was a righteous man and God in love took away all that he possessed in the world that his soul might be saved.
- ii. To Abraham and Joseph; both were very prosperous in worldly goods, but both were quite unworldly.

So God prospers those who do not make riches the end of their life.

## XVI

### *JACOB—I*

#### *BESETTING SINS*

“Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.”—GEN. xlvii. 9.

WHAT a strange life was Jacob's for a great life! A life of promise ending in bitter disappointment; a life of sorrow and toil with but little reward here; a life spoiled by a besetting sin; for that was the explanation of it, a great life spoiled by a besetting sin! How many lives have been ruined by the same cause! Judas was an Apostle, was almost a saint, but not only his life was spoiled but his soul was lost through an unconquered besetting sin. Jacob seems to have inherited the acquisitiveness of his mother's family; for Laban stands before us, both in the scene in which Eliezer obtained his sister as



Isaac's wife, and also in all his dealings with Jacob, as a thoroughly covetous man, one who loved money and prosperity with the passion almost of a miser. And Jacob with this inordinate desire to possess was also unscrupulous in his methods of attaining his ends; the end to him seemed so desirable and he longed for it so intensely that again and again he used the most unworthy means to reach it. His besetting sins were covetousness and that duplicity which so often accompanies it.

Jacob's childhood was the time when the sin was developed. The germ seems to have been inherited. He had a thoroughly unhealthy home. There was favoritism on the part of both his parents; Isaac preferred Esau, his mother cared more for him, and among the first things that he saw was his mother deceiving his father in order to further her ends, in order to obtain for him the blessing, and Isaac weakly allowing the sins of his older brother Esau.

We are told of two instances in which covetousness showed itself most markedly in his

early life. The first was when he bought from Esau the birthright for a mess of pottage. The birthright had been promised him by God. It was a spiritual gift, to be possessed in its fullness only in the future, a thing indeed to be desired, but not to be obtained as he obtained it, by unlawful means. His sin was in trusting to his own cunning to obtain what was desirable in itself, rather than relying upon God's promise to give it to him. And then later, when his father seemed to be dying and desired to bestow his benediction upon Esau, Jacob, by his mother's suggestion, obtained the blessing by the most disgraceful deception practiced upon his poor blind father. While Esau was out hunting, simulating his brother's voice and raiment and taking advantage of the old man's blindness, Jacob won and obtained that benediction which God had all along meant him to have, but which, instead of trusting to God's promise, he snatched by such unworthy means. We may be sure that if he had trusted God, he would have received the blessing, but when he *thought* he saw it going

to Esau he at his mother's advice was guilty of a sin of deception, which stands out as the great blot upon his life.

Such was his besetting sin, and oh, how sad was its punishment! Driven out from home an exile, his penance was life-long. Driven out from home as it were to begin life again in the world, with no other inheritance than those two strong sins which were the misery of his life; the rest of his life a struggle against them, a real effort to overcome them, but the besetting sins coming up again and again and spoiling all the beauty and peace and happiness of his life. On the other hand we must remember that he was a really religious man, he tried to conquer those sins, but in his childhood they had been so fostered, and allowed to gain such a hold upon him that to the very end of his life they do not seem to have been entirely removed. In addition to the punishment of exile and to the struggle with sin, there were his sorrows of labor with Laban, who defrauded him of his wages, the grief caused by his own disobedient and wicked chil-

dren, the loss of Joseph, whom he loved ; and yet he persevered struggling, and at last, after the night spent in wrestling at Jabbok,—“*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*” (Gen. xxxii. 26),—he won from God the blessing: “*Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel : for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed*” (Verse 28). Yet how much sin, how much sorrow might have been avoided if only he had not begun with those two strong sins spoiling an otherwise beautiful character.

Now, my dear children, the lesson that Jacob teaches is very simple, very clear, and very important. It is, of course, the necessity of conquering besetting sins whilst we are young, of meeting them and overthrowing them before they have obtained a real hold upon our character. We all have besetting sins. We must strive first to discover exactly what they are, and this is no easy task, for Satan and self-love will try to deceive us ; and then we must at once set to work to root them up out of our character.

You cannot realize, dear children, as those who are older can, the joy and strength of beginning life in the world free, instead of beginning it a slave to sin; so that we must all try really to know our sins. How are they to be discovered, these besetting sins, which try to elude our search, hiding away in the lurking-places of our soul,—putting forth their fruit instead of their roots? By daily self-examination. Strive to find out, dear children, every night what you have done wrong during the day, and then try to notice every week what sin there is that comes up continually, what sin there is that seems to be as it were a part of yourself—that is your besetting sin. Then when you have by self-examination learned to know the sin, by penitence and prayer strive to conquer it; by prayer, asking for God's grace for the struggle, and then by acts of penitence rooting up each weed of sin as it appears in the pathway of your life. You know how quickly weeds grow, but if we watch and pull up each weed as it appears, how much easier it is to keep them under than if we let them go

on and get started and get their roots well into the soil before we begin our work of weeding. Penitence is the means by which you must pull up the weeds, by which you must eradicate the sin; and then prayer—prayer for God's grace. But that is not all. Your own will must do its part. That God will give abundant grace in answer to prayer we are absolutely certain, and when we fall we know it is not because we have not sufficient grace, but because our own wills do not co-operate with that grace. Do not think that God will take away your sin in answer to your prayer. If He did, He would simply leave as it were the root of that sin in your nature to come up again. No, in answer to prayer God will give you that grace that will enable you to conquer the sin so that you will be stronger than if you had never had it.

And then remember that besetting sins are not only sins of word and act but also sins of thought. It was not merely that Jacob in word and act deceived Esau and his father. That was



the outcome of his sin, but it began in his thoughts, in that inordinate desire for the birth-right which led him to distrust God's promise and to use such deceitful methods to obtain that which he was probably always thinking about. If we are contented only to fight our sins in acts and words we shall never *root* them up from our heart, nay, it is even more important to conquer the very stronghold of sin in our thoughts, for if we can stop them there we may be quite sure that the acts and words will fall off of their own accord.

Now, dear children, remember that Jacob was a very great man, a man with immense strength of character, a man whose life began with the most glorious promises, a man with a strong religious temperament, one who wished to love and serve God, yet much of his life was spoiled and the promises ended in disappointment, just because in his childhood he allowed a besetting sin to grow unchecked, until it had obtained such control over him that it took all the rest of his life to try to overcome it. And this is very

common. Many wake up to it when too late, when like Jacob there is nothing left but weary struggle to keep the sin under. Begin now, while sin is weak in you; begin now and conquer your besetting sins, and when you grow up to manhood and womanhood and go out to your true life in the world, you will go out with a sense of conscious freedom and strength, to bring forth good fruit to the glory of God and your own great happiness.

#### ANALYSIS.

- I. A great life spoiled by a besetting sin :
  - i. In childhood it developed, the danger of an unhealthy home.
  - ii. Twice especially covetousness showed itself, in purchasing the birthright, and stealing the blessing.
  - iii. The punishment was terrible and life-long : the struggle with the sin, and to be the victim of the deceit of others.
  - iv. Yet Jacob was a really religious man and tried to conquer his faults.

---

II. The lesson : Conquer besetting sins while you are young.

- i. You must discover them by self-examination.
- ii. Root them out by penitence.
- iii. Watch against their return.

## XVII

### *JACOB—II*

#### *THE VISION OF HEAVEN*

“And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set ; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac : the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.”—GEN. xxviii, 11-14.

JACOB’S first night away from home ! and Jacob was very fond of home. He had been brought up to depend very much upon the affections of home-life, and this first night away was not spent among friends, by a cheerful fire-side, talking about those he loved, but alone in a wilderness, the only roof the stars, his only

bed the ground, his pillow a stone, the noises of the night around him, the growls of the wild beasts, from which he was entirely unprotected, and what made it worse, the thought: "It is my own fault; my dangers and misery are the results of my own sin."

Poor Jacob! Do you not think, dear children, that he must have felt very unhappy and perhaps very much afraid? The world was before him, and he had no idea how it might treat him. If he were not devoured by wild beasts or killed by robbers, he hoped to make his way to Haran, where his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, lived, but he was a stranger there and had never seen Laban, and did not know at all how he would be received. Laban did not know he was coming, and so would not expect him. He had no idea what sort of man his uncle was. Yes, dear children, this must have been a very dark moment in Jacob's life, his heart must have been very heavy, he must have realized then the bitterness of sin and its terrible consequences.

But the night drew on, and weary with his long walk, Jacob lay down to sleep. He dreamed—it was no ordinary dream, but a wondrous vision, sent him by God. He saw a ladder which touched both earth and Heaven, and up and down the ladder the Angels of God ascending and descending, and above the ladder the Lord Himself stood. That ladder represented the Sacred Humanity of our Blessed Lord, for this vision was one of the great revelations of the Incarnation, of the Coming of God the Son to take our nature upon Him, to be made Man. And the Angels of God ascending and descending are there because they always wait upon our Blessed Lord, where He is they cluster around Him; so that we say in the Office of the Holy Eucharist, just before the Consecration: “With Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name.”

Now, if we turn to the Gospel of St. John, the first chapter and the fifty-first verse, we shall find that our Blessed Lord said to Nathan-



ael: "*Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*" I am afraid there are many people who read this verse without noticing that our Lord is referring to Jacob's vision, and is explaining clearly that that vision pointed to His Own Incarnation, so that we are not left merely to our own ideas in saying that the ladder with the Angels ascending and descending was a revelation of the Incarnation, but we have our Lord's own definite teaching that it was so. Let us stop for a moment, while I point this out to you a little more fully. When Nathanael came to our Blessed Lord, brought by St. Philip, our Lord said of him: "*Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*" (Verse 47). Now what did our Lord mean by these words, "an Israelite in whom is no guile?" The first who bore the name of Israel, you know, was Jacob, for that name, which means "A Prince of God," was given him by the Angel at Peniel, when after he had wrestled all night he said, "*I will not let thee go, except*

*thou bless me*" (Gen. xxxii, 26). And the Angel said : "*Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel : for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed*" (Verse 28). But the great characteristic of poor Jacob was not that he was without guile, but that he was full of guile—duplicity was one of his besetting sins ; and so our Lord says of Nathanael that while he was like Jacob in prevailing with God in prayer—for doubtless that is what our Lord meant when he said : "*When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee,*" for under that fig tree Nathanael was probably pouring forth his soul in prayer (St. John i. 48)—yet he was unlike Jacob in that he was perfectly simple and sincere. And then our Lord, having thus referred to the story of Jacob, which Nathanael, as an Israelite, would at once understand, goes on further to refer to Jacob's Vision, saying that what Jacob saw only in dream, they should see in reality—the Angels of God ascending and descending, not upon a ladder, but upon Him Whom the ladder

represented, the Son of Man, Who, being God, for our sakes became Man. So we find Angels ministering to Him during His Life ; at the Temptation, which had then just taken place, in His Passion, at His Resurrection, and a cloud of Angels which received Him out of the Apostles' sight as He went up to His Throne in Heaven in His glorious Ascension. And so to-day, when His Sacred Humanity, Which is forever joined to His Divinity, is present upon the Altar in the Holy Eucharist, although we cannot see them, that Altar is surrounded by Angels worshipping with us our Lord Jesus Christ, the King both of Angels and of Saints.

Then besides the vision that Jacob saw at Beth-el, there was the promise of God : "*The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*"

*And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of*" (Gen. xxviii. 13-16). What a glorious promise! Not only that He would give to him and to his seed that land, not only that in the future his seed should be as the dust of the earth, and that in them all the families of the earth should be blessed—that is, that from his seed our Lord Jesus Christ should be born, by Whom all the world is redeemed—but also that in this present life God would be with him, would keep him in all places whither he went, would bring him back into this land of his fathers, and would not leave him until He had fulfilled all this promise.

- *"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven"* (Verses 16, 17). This place where

Jacob slept was a type of God's House, the Church; that House which is indeed the Gate of Heaven; that House where alone in the Blessed Sacrament is the Vision of Heaven, Angels ascending and descending upon the Ladder, the Sacred Humanity of our Blessed Lord.

*“And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el. . . . And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee”* (Verses 18–22). He put up a pillar, and poured oil upon it, and made a vow. Some people, dear children, have quite misunderstood Jacob's vow

---

and thought that it was a sort of bargain that he was making with God, that if the Lord would take care of him and bring him back in peace, *then, but not otherwise*, the Lord should be his God and he would build a house of God in that place and would give a tenth of all that he had to God. But that is not at all what Jacob meant. If you read carefully, you will see that all that he mentions as a condition has been already promised him by God, and surely he did not mean that if God kept His promise he would serve Him, and that if God, did not, he would not serve Him. He meant, rather, that unless God did take care of him in all the terrible dangers which were before him, he could not serve God in that or any other place, because he could not live. Surely, my children, Jacob meant that he realized so fully his own weakness and sin and the dangers which threatened him on every side, that in God alone could he put his trust and that if God left him he must indeed fail. It is so with us. We cannot say of ourselves that we will serve God, for if we



know anything of our own hearts we know how weak they are, and how little we can trust ourselves. We can only say, if God will help us and give us His grace, then we will do our part in co-operating with that grace and devoting our life to God's service.

You will observe that in Jacob's vow he, like Abraham, speaks of the tenth of all his substance as belonging to God. No one can serve God unless they fulfil this duty. They may serve Him with lip-service—that is, in word and appearance, but if they realize that He is indeed their God, that everything that they have comes from His Hand and that they are but His stewards, they will be very careful not to wait for that Day in which it will be said to them: “*Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward*” (St. Luke xvi. 2), but they will be striving to give in their account every day, and in that account to give to God's service at least that which He demands, one-tenth of all that He in His goodness has bestowed upon them.

And then Jacob, under God's blessing and protection, as you know, made his way to Haran and found his uncle Laban and was received by him kindly, although Laban afterwards treated him very unjustly and defrauded him again and again of his wages, but he stayed with Laban twenty years, and then God brought him back, as He promised He would, to the very place where he had set up the pillar, to Beth-el.

Jacob's life, as I told you, dear children, in my last sermon, was not a very happy one. It was full of trouble and adversity, the penance of his sin, and yet to help him to bear it there was always the thought of that wondrous Vision at Beth-el. He had seen the glories of his true Home, Heaven; God standing above the ladder, surrounded by the Angels. So in the New Testament, in the Book of Revelation, we are told how St. John saw a door set open in Heaven and heard a Voice which said: "*Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter*" (Rev. iv. 1), and was caught up into Heaven itself, and saw the glories of

that Kingdom of Love. And we may be sure that after this St. John in all his afflictions—and you know, my children, he was at this time a prisoner working in the mines at Patmos—we may be sure that in all his sorrows and ill-treatment the remembrance of that Vision so absorbed him that he hardly felt the cruelties to which he was subjected, hardly thought of the afflictions with which he was so abundantly visited. And so it may well have been with Jacob, and throughout that long life of sorrow and disappointment I think we can understand how he bore it in the remembrance of that glorious Vision. Do you not think, dear children, that if you had been privileged to see the very place marked out for you by God's love in Heaven, if you had been privileged to gaze upon the glorious choirs of the Angels, the white-robed throng of Saints, and knew that your home was one day to be among them, that you would be very willing to bear patiently the worst trials of earth, that you would never take any very great interest in the mere things of this world, they

would all seem so worthless compared with that glory which you had seen ! Well, dear children, though you have not seen it with your earthly eyes, nor in a dream, like Jacob, nor, perhaps, in the Spirit, like St. John, yet you have it revealed to you by the Church, by the Bible, on the evidence of those who have seen it, and you should strive to live in the realization of it, through faith. Remember ever that the Incarnation, the Humanity of our Blessed Lord, is our Ladder ; that we are incorporated into Him in Baptism ; that we are present, at the Holy Eucharist, even though with our earthly eyes we do not see it, amongst the very Company of Heaven and that nothing but sin can ever sever this blessed union, can ever hide this glorious Vision from our eyes. Let the thought of Heaven, your own true native Land, your everlasting, glorious Home, make you patient in bearing the trials of earth, make you watchful against that sin which alone can rob you of so great a prize, make you set your hope beyond the grave in the glories of the Beatific Vision,

Which shall be your Reward forever in Eternity.

ANALYSIS.

I. Jacob's first night away from home, its dangers.

- i. His Vision the type of the Incarnation and therefore of the Holy Eucharist; the relation of the Holy Angels to the Sacred Humanity.
- ii. Our Lord's explanation of this to Nathanael (St. John i. 47-51).
- iii. God's promise and Jacob's vow (Gen. xxviii. 13-22).
- iv. That Vision the guiding star of Jacob's after life.

## XVIII

### *JOSEPH.—I*

#### *THE COAT OF MANY COLOURS*

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age : and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.”—GEN. xxxvii. 3, 4.

THERE are few stories in the Old Testament with which you are more familiar, my dear children, than the story of Joseph’s Coat of Many Colours. Let us spend our time this afternoon in trying to see what lessons we may learn from it, for you know Saint Paul says that all things that were written in the Old Testament were written for our admonition.

Let me tell you first, so that somebody else may not upset you by telling you of it, that there is a good deal of dispute as to what the word



means which is translated "coat of many colours." Some scholars have thought that it does not mean "many colours," but "a garment with long sleeves," or a long flowing garment reaching to the hands and feet, and there have been other explanations of it. But not very long ago a painting was discovered in Egypt on the wall of a subterranean tomb at Beni-Hassan representing a procession of Asiatic foreigners in which the chieftain was distinguished by the ornamentation of his coat of many colours, and while this is the earliest and perhaps the best example, others have been found, so that it is generally now admitted that the old-fashioned translation in our Bible is the right one, and that the mark of Jacob's love for his son was a garment of many colours.

Now, I am going to ask you to remember three questions—(suppose you say them after me):

- (1). Why did Jacob give Joseph this coat of many colours?
- (2). What was the result to Joseph of having this coat?

- (3). What did the brothers do with the coat when they took it away from him?

Now let us try to answer each of these questions:

(1). Why did his father give him the coat? Because he loved him. And why did he love him? We are told that one reason was that Joseph was the son of his old age and of his favorite wife. But I think we may gather from the story of Joseph another and better reason—that his brethren were wicked, while he was good. Jacob loved him because he deserved his love by his great goodness, for Joseph was very good. Indeed, dear children, of all the different persons in the Old Testament who were types of Christ, Joseph is the only one of whom we know no fault.

(2). Now tell me what my second question was,—What was the result to Joseph of having this coat? In the second verse of my text we are told that—

- (a). His brethren hated him,
- (b). could not speak peaceably to him, and

(c). when they had an opportunity, took the coat away from him.

We know how cruel they were in selling him to the Ishmaelites in their hatred.

(3). And now for my third question :—What did Joseph's brothers do with the coat when they took it away from him?

(a). Did they wear it? No; they were envious and jealous, and, like the dog in the fable of "the dog in the manger," they didn't want it for themselves, but they couldn't bear to see Joseph keep it. It reminded them of their father's love for Joseph and of his own goodness, and that made them think of their wickedness, not in sorrow and penitence, not with a wish to be like Joseph and a resolution to try to be better; no, but with a determination to go on in their own way, and a hatred of their brother because his goodness was a reproach to them.

(b). They spoiled it. They went and dipped it in blood, and you can easily see how that would spoil a beautiful coat.

(c). They went and showed it to his father, all spoiled with the blood.

Now let us try if we cannot apply the whole of this story to ourselves, and see how like Joseph we are, or ought to be. We have a Father, to Whom we speak whenever we say the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father Which art in Heaven," a Father Who has given us a Coat of Many Colours. When? In our Baptism, when He gave to us the beautiful robe of Baptismal Grace. But perhaps some of you children are thinking, "Ah, you have made a mistake, for the robe of Baptismal Grace was a white robe, and this was a coat of many colours." Well, now let us see if we cannot get over that difficulty. I want you to think, dear children, of a ray of pure, white light, a sunbeam such as you sometimes see coming through a chink in the shutters into your room, when the shutters have been partly closed to keep out the heat. Now, if you were to take a three-sided piece of glass, like the pendants which hang from a chandelier, and which is called a "prism," and put it

in that ray of sunlight, you could break up that ray of white light into its component parts, and throw upon the wall the reflection of the seven colours which go to make up that ray of white light. For I suppose many of you know that white is really a composite colour, made up of all the other colours, so that we may think of our white robe of Baptismal Grace as made up of all the colours of the Christian Virtues, each brighter and more beautiful far than the colours of Joseph's coat. For instance, the virtues of Truth, Purity, Meekness, Humility, Honesty, Mercy, Obedience. Here we have seven of the most important virtues of a Christ-like soul, which we can think of as together making up our Coat of Many Colours given us in our Baptism.

I asked you to remember three questions about the Coat of Many Colours. What was the first?—

(1). Why did Jacob give Joseph this coat of many colours? and the answer was,—Because he loved him; and the cause of his love was,—

that Joseph was good. Now God gave us the great gift of Baptismal Grace because He loved us—not because we were good, but to help us to be good and because God was good—but after He has given it to us, God will love us all the more if we are good, and it would be very dreadful after having received so great a gift from God, so great a mark of His love, not to try very hard indeed to be good. While God in His goodness loves us even when we are not good and loves every one, even those who are very sinful, yet we are quite sure that God must love us much more when He sees that we are trying to please Him, that we are trying to keep unsullied our Baptismal robe, trying to keep bright and beautiful the virtues of a Christian childhood.

(2). Then the next question was, What was the result to Joseph of having this coat? and the answer was:—

(a). His brethren hated him. And so I am sorry to say, if we are good and keep our Baptismal robe unstained our bad companions and



brethren will hate us, because our virtues and example shame them.

(b). They could not speak peaceably to him. So we may find, perhaps, bad children will say all manner of ill-natured things to us and tease us about our religion and ridicule us for striving to be good and try to make us angry and unhappy.

(c). When they had an opportunity they took the coat away from him. So bad children, when they have an opportunity, by tempting us to sin will try to take away our Coat.

(3). Now the third question was, What did the brethren do with the coat when they took it away from him?

(a). Did they wear it? No, they were only envious and jealous and wanted to prevent him from having it. So our bad companions will not try to cultivate the virtues they see in us. They only want to rob us of them, because they are envious of us, because they know that God loves us, just as Cain was envious of Abel because God had respect to Abel's offering and not to Cain's.

(b). They spoiled it by dipping it in blood. So they only try to spoil the virtues in us, tempting us to lie—one Colour spoiled, our Truthfulness; tempting us to be immodest—another gone, our Purity; tempting us to steal, blotting out our Honesty; tempting us to be angry, spoiling our Meekness; tempting us to be vain, robbing us of our Humility; tempting us to be cruel, injuring our Mercy; tempting us to be disobedient, and so on until one after the other all the beautiful Colours are ruined.

(c). They went and showed it to his father, spoiled. So when they have robbed us of our Coat of Many Colours they will point with pleasure to their work and say, "There is the good child who goes to Church so regularly and says her prayers, see how angry and untruthful and vain she is becoming!"

So you see, my dear children, that the story of Joseph's Coat of Many Colours is the story of our own life; that we must realize that we are among wicked brethren, and the very fact of our wishing to be good and having gifts of

grace which they have not, will only make them strive the harder to tempt us and try to spoil our good gifts. We must guard our Coat of Many Colours most carefully by self-examination every night to see if any one of the colours has been injured during the day, and if so by repentance we must try to wash away the stain from it, so that our Father in Heaven may look down upon us and see us carefully preserving the Coat of Many Colours which He gave us in our Baptism as a mark of His love. You know, dear children, that there is a parable about a Marriage Supper in which one of the guests had not on a wedding garment, and so was cast into outer darkness, that is, was lost. Our Coat of Many Colours, given us in Baptism, through the discipline of life and the other gifts of God's grace is to become the Wedding Garment of our soul at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Kingdom in Heaven, that is, we are through temptations resisted and trials borne and prayers said and Sacraments continually used, to work into our Coat of Many

Colours, as it were, the character which is to be our glory in Heaven. If we lose by sin our Baptismal Robe of innocence we must strive at once to get it back by earnest penitence; if we find upon it any stain, we must wash that stain away in the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; for if we lose the Robe given to us in Baptism in the struggle of life, we cannot have the Wedding Garment at the last; but if we preserve it through all the conflicts of this world, if we defend it from all the assaults of our many foes, then the Robe of Baptism will become the Wedding Garment in which we shall sit down at the Marriage Feast of our Lord Jesus Christ in that glorious day when He comes with all His Angels and Saints to welcome His children home into the Kingdom prepared for them by their Father's love.

#### ANALYSIS.

- I. Jacob gave Joseph a coat of many colours.
  - i. Why? Because he loved him.
  - ii. What was the result to Joseph of having this coat?

- 
1. His brethren hated him.
  2. Would not speak peaceably to him.
  3. Took the coat away from him.
- iii. What did his brethren do with the coat ?
1. Did they wear it ?
  2. They spoiled it,
  3. and showed it to his father all spoiled.

II. God, our Father, gave us in Baptism a Coat of Many Colours. When ? What were the Colours ? Apply all the above points to ourselves.

III. We must guard our Coat most carefully, if any Colour is injured by sin, restore it by penitence ; for our Baptismal Robe after the discipline of life must become the Wedding Garment with which we enter Heaven.

## XIX

### *JOSEPH—II*

#### *ADVERSITY*

“ And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. . . . Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.”—  
GEN. xxxvii. 23-29.

IN my last sermon we took that part of Joseph's history which was associated with his coat of many colours, that is to say, with his childhood; and a very happy childhood it was, for he had a father who loved him very dearly, and a good mother. But as his childhood drew to a close, sorrow began to come into his life, for when he was sixteen years old, about a year before he was sold by his brethren, he lost his mother



Rachel, and as sorrows seldom come alone he was now to be tried by the deepest adversity.

His father sent him to inquire after his brethren, and he found them at Dothan, and when they saw him coming, they conspired against him to slay him. But Reuben, who wished to save his life, suggested that he should be cast into a pit and left there, intending himself afterwards to take him out of the pit. While he was in the pit, Judah proposed that they should sell him to the Ishmaelites, a caravan of whom were passing on their way to Egypt; and so like our Lord, of Whom he was a type, he was sold by his brethren—for twenty pieces of silver. These Ishmaelites in their turn, when they reached Egypt sold him as a slave to Potiphar, Captain of the King's Guard.

What a change! From a happy boy in his father's house, the favorite son of a great prince, to the condition of a slave in a foreign land, and all by no fault of his own, but by the treachery of his wicked brethren. Think of the sadness of those first few days of slavery! Some

would have spent their time in brooding over their wrongs, bitterly resenting their servitude, and only doing sullenly what they were compelled to do. How differently Joseph acted! Few could have felt the bitterness of slavery more than he, for he had been brought up in all the freedom of the wandering life of his countrymen, and had been the recipient of his father's love. But in his great adversity he exhibits two rules of conduct which I want you, dear children, to remember as the right rules to live by in time of trouble. Joseph determines that if he cannot be happy, at least he will be useful, and will be good.

(1). He determines to be useful. So he goes to his work as a slave with such industry and care that very soon he rises to be the overseer of the whole house. God blesses his efforts and he becomes Potiphar's steward, and from the fact that we are distinctly told that God blessed him, we may be very sure that in all his adversity he thought of God, that he let his very troubles drive him to God in prayer, as

troubles always should. The Psalmist says: "*It is good for me that I have been in trouble: that I may learn thy statutes*" (Ps. cxix. 71); and this is the true use of trouble, to help us to learn more of God and of His ways of dealing with us.

(2). But just as the darkness seemed to be passing away and brighter times were dawning on Joseph's life, a great temptation befell him. Potiphar's wife tempted him to commit a great sin. Now you know I told you that the other thing that Joseph in his adversity kept before him was a determination to be good—to be useful, and to be good; and therefore he at once resisted the temptation, remembering God's Presence and saying to Potiphar's wife, "*How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" (Gen. xxxix, 9). She tempted him again and again, from day to day; still he remembered God's Presence and never yielded in the least. Now this was hard enough, to be so tempted, and we should perhaps think that he deserved to have been rewarded by God for

his goodness, instead of which he was punished for it; for Potiphar's wife accused him of the very sin which he refused to commit, and he was cast into prison, and so was punished, not for doing wrong but for refusing to do wrong. His lot as a slave had seemed hard enough, but now he was in prison, and in such a prison!—for in those days, dear children, prisoners were not treated as kindly as they are now. But again Joseph began to live by his two rules in adversity—to try to be useful and to be good, and he made himself so useful that the keeper of the prison committed all the prisoners and all that there was in the prison to Joseph's care. And here, no doubt, he found opportunities of lightening the hard lot of some of his fellow-prisoners, and became like a sunbeam in that dark, gloomy prison.

The lesson for us, dear children, is very simple and very clear. Many of us will have sooner or later to undergo trouble and adversity. Some, perhaps, even as children know what it is now to have a hard, sad lot, perhaps

from poverty, or loss of parents, or sickness, or some other cause, and the danger is lest we should become sullen and disheartened and complaining. Think of Joseph and learn from him to say: "Well, if my life is to be hard and sad, I will at least try to help other people, try to make their lives brighter, try to be useful, and above all, I will try to be good. I will try to bear my cross lovingly, for the sake of Him Who died on the Cross for me; not looking for a reward in this world, but remembering that if I suffer with Christ patiently I shall reign with Him gloriously."

But as if all this were not enough, poor Joseph had yet one more trial. Among his fellow-prisoners were the Butler and the Baker of the King of Egypt. They dreamed, you remember, two strange dreams, and they told their dreams to Joseph, and Joseph interpreted their dreams, that is, God showed him what they meant. Now the Butler said: "*In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as*

*though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth ; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes : and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand : and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it : The three branches are three days : yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place : and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler"* (Gen xl. 9-14).

*"When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head : and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh ; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof : The three baskets are three days : yet within three days shall Pharaoh*



*lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree ; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee”* (Verses 16–20).

Now when Joseph had foretold to the Butler the happy termination of his imprisonment, he made this pathetic request of him : “*Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house : for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews : and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon”* (Verses 14, 15).

Three days after this, on Pharaoh’s birthday, the Butler was sent for and restored to his position, and the Baker was hanged. Think what hopes this must have raised in Joseph ! Each day he waited, expecting that his friend the Butler would remember him and bring about his deliverance ; but we are told : “*Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him”* (Verse 23).

This was the last step in the downward path

of Joseph's long trial, for thirteen years had passed since his sorrows began. First there had been his brethren's cruelty, then his mistress's treachery, now his fellow-prisoner's ingratitude and forgetfulness. And yet through it all we may be quite sure that Joseph felt that if it was God's Will that he should suffer, it was right, and that he did not give way to useless complaints, that he did not give up trying to be useful and trying to be good; and we know that though he was greatly afflicted, God had a very great reward in store for him. So it always is, for St. Paul tells us, in the fourth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and the seventeenth and eighteenth verses, that "*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*" So try to bear your sorrows and trials, that they may work for you a

great reward, if not in this world, in the world the rewards of which are eternal; and that you may be able to do so, look not at the things which are seen, that is, not merely at the trials themselves, but at the things which are not seen, at the glorious results of all trial in that Kingdom of Love where those who have sown in tears shall reap in joy; where those who have suffered here shall reign in glory with Christ hereafter.

#### ANALYSIS.

Joseph's sorrows begin with his mother's death and follow close on one another.

I. He is sold by his brethren to the Ishmaelites, and by them to Potiphar as a slave.

His two rules in adversity to be useful and to be good.

i. The first soon raises him to the head of Potiphar's house.

ii. The second saves him from a great sin.

II. He is cast into prison and there still keeps his two rules.

- 
- i. The Butler's promise and Joseph's disappointment.
  - ii. We must expect trouble some day, let us learn from Joseph how to meet it.

## XX

### *JOSEPH—III*

#### *PROSPERITY*

“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art : thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck ; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had ; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.”—GEN. xli. 39-44.

WE left Joseph in the prison with a most hopeless future before him, treated with ingratitude by the Butler, who had forgotten him, but still, no doubt, trying to be useful and trying to be good. Two full years rolled by, and at last de-

liverance came, and such a deliverance as Joseph had never expected !

Pharaoh, King of Egypt, dreamed two dreams. First, that as he stood beside the River Nile, seven well-favored and fat fleshed kine came out of the river and fed in the meadow, and after them seven other kine, ill-favored and lean fleshed ; and these ill-favored and lean fleshed kine eat up the seven well-favored and fat kine ; and Pharaoh awoke. And the second time he dreamed, and behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good ; and seven thin ears, blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them, and the thin ears devoured the full ears ; and again Pharaoh awoke, and it was a dream. In the morning he sent for the magicians of Egypt and all the wise men, but none of them could interpret the dreams to Pharaoh. Then the Chief Butler remembered how Joseph had interpreted his dream, and he told Pharaoh of Joseph and how Joseph's interpretation of the dream of the vine with three branches had been



fulfilled ; and so Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they brought him out of his prison and put on him proper clothes, and he appeared before Pharaoh.

Pharaoh told him that he had dreamed a dream and that no one could interpret it, and asked Joseph if he could, and Joseph replied : "*It is not in me : God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace*" (Gen. xli. 16). Then Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams, and Joseph told him that they meant that there was to be first seven years of great plenty in the land of Egypt, and then seven years of great famine, during which all the corn that had been saved during the time of plenty would be consumed, and he advised Pharaoh to appoint some discreet and wise man over the land of Egypt to gather into garners and store up all the corn that could be spared during the seven years of plenty, in preparation for the years of famine ; and then, as my text tells you, Pharaoh appointed Joseph to do this work and in addition made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

---

Thus began Joseph's prosperity. He was thirty years of age at this time, and the last thirteen years of his life had been years of sorrow, slavery, and imprisonment. But with prosperity came a new form of temptation—the temptation to be selfish. It is easier, my dear children, to bear adversity with patience and fortitude than to bear prosperity with humility and unselfishness. There are many who are sanctified, that is to say, made saints of, by suffering and trial, by bearing the cross; but how few there are who are sanctified by riches! When we look around upon the world, upon the prosperous and rich, and see how they spend almost all their money upon themselves, in parading their own grandeur or ministering to their own desires, like the rich man in our Lord's parable, clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day and passing unheeded the Lazarus, the poor at their gates—when we think what a wonderful opportunity for good is given them, how much suffering they might alleviate, how much sorrow and hard-

---

ship they might minister to, and yet they do it not, is it not sad? They *think* their money is their own, to do what they please with, but they forget that they are but God's stewards. There is only one Rich Man; there never has been but one; all the rest are stewards. You can tell me, can you not, dear children, the Name of that one Rich Man?—our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom all things belong. The richest man that ever lived in this world was only our Lord's steward, and one day he, like all of us, will have to give an account for every gift and opportunity committed to his charge. But, alas! the rich forget this, and they forget, too, that they can carry nothing out of this world, and that their true wisdom and true happiness is so to use the goods that God has committed to their care as realizing that they must give up their stewardship and give an account of all they have done before the Throne of the Great Judge. They must show how they have used their talent. Yes, to be rich means to have a great temptation to use our riches

as though they were our own, and to become selfish.

Now the world had dealt so hardly with Joseph that if he had not been very good he might have argued that, as the world had treated him with cruelty, treachery, and ingratitude, he owed it no debt, and would use his wealth and position simply for self-gratification, simply to make up for the evil days through which he had passed so patiently. But as Joseph remembered God in adversity and then strove not to be discontented but to be useful and good, so did he in prosperity, and realizing that he was God's steward, he devoted himself with the greatest diligence and wisdom to works of charity and benevolence. Carefully he stored the corn during the seven plentiful years, in preparation for the seven years of famine, and while this is all that we are directly told in the Bible, yet from what we know of Joseph and from the great esteem in which he was evidently held in Egypt, we may be sure that as ruler in Egypt he introduced a great many wise

reforms for the good of the people in that country.

But he had one great sorrow still, and that was the separation from his father. Joseph's affection for his father stands out most pathetically in his whole history. He had been his father's best-loved child, and his affectionate and grateful nature never forgot the love which his father lavished upon him in his boyhood. So, though many years had passed, he still thought of his father, wondered whether he were yet alive, whether he would ever see him again.

Now we are told that when the years of famine came, Joseph not only saved the lives of the Egyptians by letting them have the corn which he had stored in the granaries, but that the people from all the countries round about came to buy corn in Egypt, and amongst others, you know, his brethren came. Here was a trial of Joseph's generosity and forbearance! His brethren now were absolutely in his power; they had wronged him most shamefully, had sold him

as a slave, and now they were in his hands, to punish them either by taking their lives or by reducing them to the same slavery to which they had doomed him. But instead of this, he treats them with the greatest kindness; he weeps with joy to see them, he tenderly inquires after his old father and his brother Benjamin, who was a baby scarcely a year old when he left home. He sends them to fetch Benjamin, retaining two of them as hostages, and then when Benjamin has come he devises a scheme to test the reality of their penitence, to prove whether they were better men than before. And finally, after making himself known to them, he sends wagons to bring his father, and obtains from the King a large and rich tract of country for them to live in. So he returns good for evil, and gladly forgives their sins against him.

But what I want you specially to notice, dear children, is the way in which Joseph's reward was the direct result of his own unselfish life. At the crisis, when he became rich and prosperous and had to face the temptation of selfishness



and pride, he devoted his well-earned power and prosperity to doing good to others, to storing up corn ready for the famine, so as to save the poor from suffering, and to improving the condition of the people whom he governed, and it was through this first good act that he found his father,—for if he had not stored up the corn his brothers would not have been led to Egypt. Then with his father and brethren around him, and happy in his own children Ephraim and Manasseh, he lived to a good old age, revered and loved alike by his countrymen and by the Egyptians, who went mourning for him at his death.

But before we take leave of Joseph, let me remind you, dear children, that he was one of the greatest types of our Lord in the Bible.

(1). Sent by his father to his brethren, they take counsel against him, reject him, strip him of his raiment, and sell him.

(2). He becomes a slave. St. Paul tells us of our Blessed Lord that He “*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of*

*a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*" (Phil. ii. 7).

(3). He is cast into prison. This typifies our Lord's visit to the Prison of the Intermediate State, when on Holy Saturday He brought out the Prisoners of Hope, the Fathers of the Old Covenant, who were waiting there for His Redemption.

(4). Joseph between the Baker and the Butler, one of whom was to be exalted and the other to be lost, pictures our Lord's work upon the Cross with the two thieves, to one of whom He foretold: "*To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise*" (St. Luke xxiii. 43); while the other died in impenitence and blasphemy.

(5). Joseph, taken from prison, is exalted to the right hand of the King. Here we have our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension.

(6). And then from his throne, Joseph saves the lives of his brethren by giving them corn in the time of famine. So our Lord, from His Kingdom in Heaven, comes down upon our Altars to feed us with the Blessed Sacrament of

---

His own Body and Blood (of Which that corn was the type) that our souls may not be starved in the famine which prevails in this world.

(7). Then last of all and best of all, Joseph is the only character without any flaw. Of all the other types of our Lord we know of some sin which they committed, but of Joseph we know of none, and in this especially is he a type of Christ, Who was without sin, Who was perfect.

So, my children, we can learn much from the study of these Old Testament characters. Some people would look upon them as simply stories without much value, but I think we can see how every one of them has a lesson for us, and a lesson as good as we can find in any part of the Bible. May God grant that some of these lessons which we have been striving to learn together from the Book of Genesis may be so engrafted in our hearts that they may bring forth good fruit in our lives, to the glory of God and the sanctification of our own souls!

---

ANALYSIS.

I. Hardly three years passed after the Baker's release before Joseph was delivered.

- i. Pharaoh's two dreams and Joseph's interpretation of them.
- ii. Joseph made ruler of the kingdom and charged to store up the corn.
- iii. The dangers of prosperity—pride and selfishness. Only one really Rich Man, all others stewards.

II. Joseph's industry and benevolence, the antidote to riches.

- i. His one sorrow, the loss of his father; the reward of his unselfish work for others that it becomes the means of re-uniting him to his father.
- ii. Joseph in seven ways a great type of Christ.











LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 822 661 3